

Great Tey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115079
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378998
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Williamson
Headteacher	Deborah Crabb
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. He observed eight lessons taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, a local authority adviser, groups of pupils and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as 32 questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 from staff and 30 from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Has the school been able to raise the overall quality of teaching?
- Has the school's efforts to improve assessment had sufficient impact and does current practice link well to the school's procedures for tracking pupil progress and target setting?
- How effective are the care systems in ensuring all pupils are equally well supported and successful, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well have the school leadership, staff and governing body worked together to maintain an effective school during a difficult last two years?

Information about the school

Great Tey is very small compared with other primary schools and draws most of its pupils from the village. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. In recent years, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been higher than average including a number with significant medical needs. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age, mixed-ability classes.

The small school roll and financial constraints have resulted in the need to discontinue providing school meals.

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

Great Tey is a satisfactory school. It has a particular strength in the way it cares for and supports the needs of all its pupils. It has successfully overcome staffing and other difficulties which hindered its progress and now ensures that the great majority of pupils achieve appropriately and develop well in terms of their personal and social growth. Throughout this period the headteacher has provided strong and resilient leadership, well supported by an active and informed governing body. Weaknesses in staffing have been dealt with decisively and the headteacher and her committed staff are working hard to improve provision.

Pupils start school with abilities broadly expected for their age, though in recent years there has been a significant minority with particular learning and medical needs. Pupils' achievement dipped in 2010 but since then improvements are ensuring that most Year 6 pupils make expected progress to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers, helped by effective additional learning support. However, a number of more-able pupils do not reach the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, reflected in their high levels of attendance, and behave well in lessons and around the school. The good safeguarding procedures ensure pupils feel safe and they respond positively to the school's healthy eating promotion. Most are involved in sports and other physical activities including taking advantage of the school swimming pool. Pupils share a strong sense of community. Although many are not necessarily confident to take an active lead in school and community affairs, almost all pupils are considerate to each other and respond well in assemblies and class activities.

Teaching quality has been strengthened, but with the small school roll, teachers and support staff face the challenge of teaching a wide range of ages and abilities in each class. Staff are well organised, manage behaviour well and maintain good relationships with pupils. The numerous class activities keep pupils involved and there is well-planned learning support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, at times, excessively long whole-class activities reduce opportunities to use learning support staff fully and provide varied challenge to pupils with different abilities. There has been a strong school focus on ensuring marking is positive and provides constructive advice. Even so, on occasion there is insufficient attention to the quality and presentation of pupils' work and advice does not always

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clearly show pupils how they can improve their work and so make progress in terms of their National Curriculum levels.

A key strength of the school is its good care, guidance and support, reflected in the thorough way it targets support for those with particular needs and works closely with its partners and agencies. This helps pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and enables others with complex medical conditions to continue their education in school.

The governing body works very closely with the headteacher and together they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear strategy for further school improvement that includes collaborating with similar local schools and accessing local authority expertise. The headteacher is very well regarded for her drive and enthusiasm, but has to manage virtually all aspects of the school and share some of the teaching, which is too much for one person over the long term. Nonetheless, the whole staff work well together to improve aspects of teaching, assessment and curriculum as well as sustaining strong care, support and guidance. For these reasons the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further 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?

- Ensure consistently good teaching that is challenging and makes the most effective use of learning support staff by:
 - providing an appropriate balance of whole class and supported individual/group work
 - having an effective range of learning activities that meet all the needs of the widely different ages and abilities in the class, including more-able pupils
 - ensuring sufficient focus and time on improving the quality and presentation of pupils' work.
- Further improve the quality of marking and assessment by
 - providing regular opportunities in lessons for pupils to assess their own and one another's progress
 - showing pupils how to improve their work in order to achieve or exceed their National Curriculum targets, especially in English and mathematics
 - Providing staff training in tracking pupils' progress and moderating assessments.
- Where possible in such a small school, involve all staff more fully in its management and development.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Progress in Years 1 and 2 has been consistently satisfactory or better and improvements in teaching now ensure that progress across other years is now at least satisfactory and increasingly good. For example, learning was particularly effective in a combined Year 5 and 6 class, where pupils confidently explained and used different forms of questioning, and were able to evaluate and articulate the progress they were making. A combined Year 3 and 4 lesson clearly demonstrated the good progress being made by all pupils using different techniques for mental addition, made possible by the effective use of three learning support staff working with different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in the school and closely match or do better than the national average for their group. These pupils are fully included in lessons and well supported with specific teaching programmes to aid their learning and/or physical development.

All pupils surveyed said they enjoy coming to school and endeavour to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school council is active in sponsorship activities and raising funds and all pupils get involved in village activities including through the church. There is a considerable participation in music, art and sports and pupils appreciate the considerable effort the school makes to develop a wider curriculum, embracing other cultures and societies, such as India.

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	3
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	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

All staff make a considerable effort to engage pupils through the effective use of interactive whiteboards and resources. A good example of this was in a history lesson on wartime food rationing where the teacher showed the actual rationed amounts as well as a well-chosen video clip. The best teaching has a clear learning purpose and carefully planned learning steps, with opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their progress. Satisfactory lessons, while having engaging activities, are not always sufficiently challenging, especially for more-able pupils. The planning and marking of pupils' work are not always sufficiently linked to the school's use of National Curriculum levels to track pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics and English. This reduces the extent to which pupils understand what they have to do to meet their National Curriculum targets.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed the curriculum to make it more interesting, with more opportunities for art, music and multi-cultural study. Despite the small size of the school, pupils benefit from a variety of after-school sports activities including swimming in the school's own pool and football coaching provided by the local professional football club. Links with secondary schools are used well to enhance provision in various subjects, including mathematics for the gifted and talented. The school choir, recorder players and bellringers perform in the local community. The use of the sounds letters make to support literacy is used well in Year 1 and for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but has not been extended across other year groups.

Care, guidance and support are a strength of this inclusive school. The school provides a calm and supportive context for all pupils, including a few whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Despite the need to reduce teaching staff with a falling school roll, the school continues to sustain its strong learning-support provision. This clearly benefits those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the great majority of whom meet their learning targets.

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?

The effective governing body works closely with the headteacher in carrying out comprehensive reviews of the different areas of work within the school, including

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regular observations of teaching and learning. It has a keen interest in ensuring safeguarding is secure and carefully monitored. All legal requirements are met, and all necessary training is up to date. The governing body is well informed about child protection and the work of the school in supporting pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It is rigorous in its checks on risk assessment and active in ensuring that the school site is secure and that there is sufficient supervision of play areas at break times.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in its caring ethos and holistic approach to pupils' development and its positive contribution to pupils' good behaviour, high attendance and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher personally tracks the progress of every pupil, and has evidence to demonstrate that most pupils are now meeting their targets and gaps in performance between different groups are closing. There are good strategies in place to support any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, or who are at risk of falling behind.

There are well-established links with outside agencies that support and complement the school's good care, guidance and support and links with the local primary consortium, through which the school benefits from shared training and advice. Links with secondary schools, the local football club, the sports partnership and the local diocese, provide a range of specialist teaching, coaching and advice that benefit pupils academically and in their personal development.

Considerable effort is made to engage and inform parents and carers. The headteacher meets parents and carers every morning at the gate and is always accessible with a same-day response to any concerns. There is a half-termly parents' forum attended by governors and headteacher, parents' and carers' assemblies, pupil progress evenings and effective use of email. There is a strong and active parent-teacher association and the great majority of parents and carers are positive about being kept well informed. The school curriculum helps pupils develop a greater understanding of the wider world. There are strong links with the local village and the school is developing overseas links with India, though these are at an early stage.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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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	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

Children make appropriate progress over the Reception year in most areas of learning and benefit from the support they receive to help them in their social and emotional development in a safe environment. Children make good progress in their physical development and aspects of personal and creative development, but progress is patchy in other aspects. Standards in communication, literacy and numeracy are noticeably weaker for some children and these children do not reach levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. This is partly because some children experience only two terms in Reception, joining the class in January.

Children are taught in the same class as Years 1 and 2, though learning activities are sufficiently varied to ensure coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas. There is good adult-led learning but relatively fewer child-initiated activities to help pupils develop independence. There is a reasonable 'free flow' movement between indoor classrooms and the outside areas and both provide a sound range of resources and learning materials. Planning is usually detailed and the children's 'learning journey' is well documented with regular and detailed assessments. Moderation of these assessments to ensure accuracy against the Early Years Foundation Stage standards is less well developed.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and the school has a clear view of areas for development, including more assessment training. The school works closely with the village pre-school in identifying and providing for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and parents and carers are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's 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

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Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers had concerns about their child's progress and the quality of some teaching. The inspection found that there was some unevenness in the quality of teaching, and a limited use of National Curriculum levels in the otherwise regular assessment of pupils' work means that pupils and parents and carers may not always be clear about progress. A very few parents and carers were worried about misbehaviour but there was no evidence of this during the inspection. The inspection recognised considerable strengths in care and guidance, particularly in the support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although a few parents and carers felt their child's needs were not always met. The great majority of parents and carers were very positive about the school in providing a welcoming and safe place for their children to learn.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Tey Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 inspector received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	59	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	44	13	41	5	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	47	13	41	4	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	41	17	53	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	47	17	53	0	0	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)	13	41	15	47	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	41	16	50	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	41	14	44	4	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	47	14	44	1	3	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	13	41	16	50	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	59	11	34	2	6	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Tey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Colchester, CO6 1AZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education, and ensures that most of you achieve as well as you should by the time you leave.

Many of you appreciate the help and care you receive and say the school is a safe place to be. I was impressed with the work the school does to support those of you who have particular learning needs or just need to be helped if you are having a problem. I was pleased to see how well behaved you are and how you work well together in lessons. It was good to see that so many of you are committed to healthy eating and are actively involved in different sports and physical activities after school.

In fact, many of your parents and carers recognise that the staff work hard to make lessons interesting, which is perhaps why so many of you like school and your attendance is exceptionally good. I found the lessons interesting too but think you will make even better progress if you spent less time as a whole class listening to the teacher and more time working in your different groups on learning tasks matched to your ability. I have also asked the school to give some of you more challenging work to make even better progress. Your teachers mark your work regularly and often tell you how you can improve it. This is very important and I have asked them to do more of this to explain more carefully how you can improve your National Curriculum levels.

The headteacher, the governing body and all the staff are working hard to further improve the school. You can all help by maintaining your excellent attendance, concentrating in lessons and taking more care in the presentation of your written and other class work.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston
Lead inspector

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