

Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117433
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379418
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Wilkinson
Interim Headteacher	Jackie Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Church Meadow Great Gaddesden Hemel Hempstead HP1 3BT
Telephone number	01442 255734
Fax number	01442 255107
Email address	admin@greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 November 2011
Inspection number	379418

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 information 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'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

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 two additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons taught by four different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and with staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, teachers' lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's documentation, which included records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 33 parents and carers were also considered.

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

- The team looked at the consistency of progress that pupils make, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics across the school.
- It investigated the impact of the relatively high level of pupil mobility upon the school's overall outcomes.
- It considered the extent to which staff use assessment information effectively to plan challenging work to enable all pupils, particularly those identified as more-able, to make good progress.
- It explored the effectiveness of senior leaders and managers and the governing body in developing the school's capacity to make improvements.

Information about the school

Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School is a small, rural primary school. Although a few pupils come from the immediate area, the great majority live at some distance, principally in Hemel Hempstead. In line with local practice, the school admits Nursery-aged children as 'other fours' to the Reception class. There has been a relatively high level of pupil mobility recently, with pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual entry and exit points. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage, although enrolment in recent years has become increasingly ethnically diverse. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has experienced some disruption in its senior leadership over the last two years and, more recently, other changes in staffing. Since April 2011 the school has been led and managed by a highly experienced interim headteacher. The governing body aims to appoint a permanent headteacher for September 2012.

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 Gaddesden Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Despite a lack of continuity in leadership recently, the excellent leadership and management of the interim headteacher, the enthusiasm and commitment of the current teaching staff and the effective support of the local authority have together ensured that the school is in good heart. Pupils make steady progress overall, and progress is accelerating in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Although the partnership with parents and carers has been under strain in the last few months, the inspection survey indicates a high level of satisfaction with the school at present. Almost all parents and carers acknowledge the school's commitment to pupils' well-being. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They attend frequently, enjoy school very much, feel very safe and have positive attitudes to learning. They have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles and diet. Although pupils' contribution to the school and their involvement with the local community are both satisfactory, opportunities to engage with more diverse communities in the United Kingdom or overseas are limited.

The progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 remains satisfactory and their attainment by Year 6 is broadly average. Current initiatives to raise outcomes in mathematics have yet to match the increased progress and improved attainment in English in 2011. Teaching is securely satisfactory and often good. In the best lessons learning is driven forward at a rapid pace and challenge is finely tuned to meet the needs of all abilities. In other lessons pace and challenge sometimes drop. Teachers are building their confidence in evaluating pupils' progress. Their marking of writing is thorough, indicating what should be done to improve. However, this approach is not always evident in other subjects. Pupils' personalised targets have been in abeyance and there are few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work. The satisfactory curriculum is strongly focused on literacy and numeracy, leading to increasingly good progress. Extra-curricular provision and enrichment opportunities are satisfactory.

Despite recent difficulties, the school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Teaching and pupils' progress, though satisfactory overall, are improving, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body has grown in confidence and is challenging school leaders about aspects of its performance. As yet, however, their challenge is not consistent and they are still developing their vision for the school's future. Self-evaluation is accurate and development planning is well judged. The school is functioning efficiently and newly-appointed and newly qualified staff are eager to take on middle management roles.

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

However, most day-to-day leadership is currently dependent upon the interim headteacher and the senior teacher.

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?

- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school further through:
 - implementing, when possible, more formal middle management structures within the school
 - ensuring that governors build a more robust vision for the school's future development and provide more consistent challenge for school leaders.

- Improve teaching and embed and extend assessment procedures, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring lessons are consistently well paced and activities closely matched to pupils' different abilities
 - extending existing good practice in the marking of pupils' writing to other subjects of the curriculum
 - implementing learning targets for individual pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of diverse cultures and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most children enter Reception with skills and experience slightly below expectations. While outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have typically been average, more dynamic leadership and a focus on crucial skills such as children's writing are ensuring that the pace of learning is accelerating this year. Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is generally around the expected level, although there was a significant improvement at Year 2 in 2011. Achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

The school is focused on improving pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in mathematics, and, while there are still inconsistencies in the pace of learning in some lessons, these efforts are beginning to have an impact. Effective organisation, accurate assessment, good pace, challenge and engagement by pupils were variously evident in a number of lessons. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson on place value, pupils were intrigued by the patterns emerging when whole numbers

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

were divided by ten or one hundred. Some extended the challenge by speculating as to the effect of dividing by two hundred. This generated some creative thinking and the lesson promoted overall good learning for pupils, although some opportunities were missed to extend learning still further by following up pupils’ ideas. In a Year 1 and 2 literacy lesson, pupils were learning how speech could be represented in writing, leading on to the use of speech marks to denote direct speech. This lesson moved at some pace, carried by the lively teaching style. Analysing the story of Cinderella, pupils suggested a range of words which could be used to reflect both the context and mood of the narrative and the style of the speaker – and could also demonstrate, with much enthusiasm, how this might be interpreted by a reader. This produced great amusement but also a high level of engagement and learning. The suggestion in a Year 2 and 3 history lesson that pupils might represent Samuel Pepys’ reactions to the approaching Great Fire through a drama sequence engaged pupils’ creative and organisational skills well and led to some effective learning.

Personal development outcomes are strengths. Pupils demonstrate mature attitudes and treat each other and adults with courtesy. They are keen to help. The school council, however, has only just been revived and does not yet represent an effective channel for pupils’ views. Good social skills and average basic skills ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for later life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is outstanding, supported by strong church links. Cultural development is satisfactory.

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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

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 are well motivated to learn and relationships within classrooms are consistently good. Staff often use questioning effectively to explore pupils’ understanding and extend their learning. In satisfactory lessons, though pupils make progress, teachers sometimes spend a little too long explaining or do not take action quickly when a group of pupils could do more challenging work. The curriculum is satisfactorily adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and effective support staff ensure that these pupils make steady progress. Recently-introduced pupil progress reviews, rigorous tracking and the reintroduction of assessment strategies are contributing to increasingly accurate evaluation of pupils’ learning needs. However, the school has rightly prioritised the further development of assessment practice, including the introduction of individual learning targets, to ensure that provision for all pupils, particularly the more able, is consistently appropriate. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work are beginning to develop.

The curriculum has a primary focus on the basic skills within English and mathematics. Cross-curricular skills, particularly writing, are promoted satisfactorily. There are satisfactory opportunities for art and design, music and physical development. Although appropriate provision is made for the very small number of pupils currently identified as gifted, the school does not yet have a coherent programme of support for such pupils. The school is currently auditing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in order to identify ways to accelerate their progress. Personal, social, health and citizenship education has a positive impact on pupils’ personal development.

Staff are very responsive to pupils’ needs, particularly those considered to be potentially vulnerable. Transition arrangements are good. Pupils who arrive at the school part-way through their education are given effective support to settle, and, as a result, their outcomes are similar to other pupils. The school works well with external agencies to support pupils who need additional help. There is good practice, evident in case studies, in supporting the health, social and behavioural needs of pupils in challenging circumstances.

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?

Despite recent turbulence, the highly effective leadership of the interim headteacher,

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 the commitment of current staff, have ensured that morale is high at present. The key priorities are clearly established. Staff are well motivated and have high expectations of pupils’ learning and of their personal development. They are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities. The school has worked hard, and successfully, to sustain its partnership with parents and carers. The school’s partnership with other schools is satisfactory. The sound leadership and management of teaching and learning is ensuring a consistent approach to planning, the management of pupils’ behaviour and the presentation of written work, and is having a positive impact on pupils’ progress. Rigorous tracking now enables the progress of different groups of pupils to be analysed,

The governing body has also seen changes. However, under the leadership of an effective and enthusiastic Chair, it is actively building capacity, drawing upon the skills of new, committed members with appropriate specialist skills. Governors’ skills in the interpretation of performance data are satisfactory but improving and they are gaining confidence in providing the expected challenge to school leaders. They are actively involved in defining a direction for the future leadership of the school, but this is a comparatively recent development. The accrued budget deficit is on track to be cleared by April 2012. Statutory responsibilities are met, including those for safeguarding. The governing body ensures that safeguarding practice is good, with thorough record-keeping and consistent application of robust procedures.

Links and partnerships with agencies ensure good support for pupils who have specific needs. The school itself is cohesive and pupils have sound links with the local community through the church. Community cohesion is promoted through opportunities in the curriculum to study diverse faiths and lifestyles. However, little has yet been done to build a closer engagement with other groups nationally or internationally so as to increase pupils’ first-hand experiences of others from backgrounds different to their own.

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	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

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

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Under new leadership, the Early Years Foundation Stage has made good improvements to its provision and environment. These are now good, and there is corresponding good learning taking place in many activities. However, it is early days and records show that the children who left the Early Years Foundation Stage in July 2011 made barely satisfactory progress, with weaknesses in their writing. Because the good provision has not yet had a sustained impact, outcomes are judged satisfactory rather than better.

Staff have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of children of this age, and form a cohesive team. Welfare arrangements are good and children receive sensitive, caring support. Well-planned induction arrangements contribute to an effective partnership with parents and carers and ensure that children feel safe. Children understand daily routines, behave well and relationships with adults and with other children are good.

The four-year-olds who are in their Nursery year gain confidence and develop their personal and social skills well. Their distinct age-related needs are met and they make satisfactory progress in other areas. Even so, most children enter Reception at levels slightly below those expected. Satisfactory teaching has typically supported generally sound progress, with outcomes average in 2011, although some way below in aspects of communication and literacy. Currently, children are responding well to greater challenge and school records, and lesson observations, indicate that progress is improving strongly. Staff take every opportunity to engage children’s attention and promote learning, particularly in the recently developed outdoor area. Several children were captivated by cooking latkes (potato pancakes), an activity which encompassed a great deal of incidental learning, but also contributed to their multicultural awareness through the study of Judaism. Writing, a weakness in 2011, is now planned for effectively, with many opportunities, indoors and out, for children to embed their writing skills. The teaching of sounds and letters is effective. Staff make good use of the information they hold on children’s progress to inform the next steps in learning and this helps promote a good pace to children’s learning. Overall, there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are well deployed in the outdoor area and intervene effectively to promote learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well.

Observational records provide an accurate picture of children’s learning. The school maintains assessment files, or ‘learning journeys’, which track the progress of individual children and are shared with parents and carers. These are exceptionally thorough, high quality records. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently good, sensitively driving through changes in practice and raising expectation, with an emerging, but clearly evident, impact on children’s outcomes.

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

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over half the parents and carers responded to the survey, which is well above average for a primary school. Although a small number raised issues specific to individual children, the very large majority of those who responded are very happy with the school and with the care it provides for their children. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the interim headteacher. They feel that the school now engages well with parents and carers and that their children greatly enjoy attending. One said, 'Since the current headteacher arrived, the school has gone from strength to strength.' Another said, 'The new teachers are a breath of fresh air and very motivating for the pupils.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Gaddesden Church of England 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	82	4	12	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	52	14	42	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	48	14	42	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	76	7	21	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	22	67	7	21	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	48	17	52	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)	10	30	21	64	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	52	12	36	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	39	17	52	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	58	11	33	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	64	9	27	2	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	67	8	24	1	3	2	6

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.

28 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 3BT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views and spending time in lessons. We found that while yours is a satisfactory school, it has some strengths. These are the things we liked best.

- You have good attitudes to learning and make steady progress.
- You feel very safe in school and behave well.
- With lively teaching and interesting activities, the younger children in Nursery and Reception are now making better progress.
- You are very good at reflecting and thinking about important things like faith.
- Staff care for you and support you well.
- You understand the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- The current headteacher is providing really effective leadership for the school.

So that you do even better, we have asked the school to do the following things:

- to help the headteacher by ensuring that, when they are ready, all staff take on responsibilities and that the governors really challenge the school to be as good as it can be
- to ensure that staff give you work that is just right, not too easy or too hard, and keep your learning moving rapidly in lessons
- to help you get really involved in your learning by marking all work thoroughly, helping you to build your skills in judging the quality of your work and giving you targets to help you move your learning on more quickly
- to give you opportunities to learn about other cultures and communities within the United Kingdom and further afield.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
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.**