

Great Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124732
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380967
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Greatrex

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Gooch
Headteacher	Stephen Dodd
Date of previous school inspection	09 September 2008
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed seven lessons and the work of five teachers and several teaching assistants working with classes, groups and individuals. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, staff and governors. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at external monitoring reports, data about pupils' performance, development planning and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses from questionnaires returned by 50 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils.

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

- How effective is the whole school focus on writing?
- To what extent is the quality of planning and preparation for re-organisation ensuring a smooth transition?

Information about the school

Great Finborough Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. These pupils have a range of needs including autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The headteacher has been working in partnership with another primary school. From Easter 2012, when the handover to the new headteacher at that school is complete, he will be full-time at Great Finborough Primary School again. The school 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Great Finborough Primary is a good school that fully meets its vision to be an inclusive school. It succeeds in its aim of 'welcoming and supporting children from all backgrounds, abilities and needs, while ensuring this is not to the detriment of the education of other children'. It rightly has a good reputation for balancing these two goals effectively. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their very varied starting points. Equal opportunities are at the heart of everything the school does. All pupils do well because the school monitors each individual's progress so that activities closely match their levels and needs. Carefully targeted support enables those who struggle with learning, and those working at higher levels, to do well. On the rare occasion they begin to fall behind, this is quickly spotted through good monitoring. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. Furthermore, the school never 'rests on its laurels', but rather always strives to improve. This is a crucial key element in achieving consistently above average performance. For example, when teachers analysed pupils' writing, they raised some relative concerns. As a result they modified the curriculum which rekindled pupils' enthusiasm for sustained writing and the quality improved again.

Pupils' attendance is high because they enjoy the outstanding creative curriculum and good teaching they receive. Very well planned curriculum activities, for example on visits to the woodland, develop pupils' life skills very well. Team work, collaboration, independence and resilience all grow as pupils test and challenge themselves. An important improvement since the last inspection is teachers' use of marking. Pupils now receive a very clear understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to focus on next. In conversation, older pupils particularly are very clear about their targets and have a good grasp of themselves as learners. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree their children enjoy school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and village community. For example, they played a key role in designing the new village play area and planting bulbs to beautify it. They also gain much from the outstanding partnership with other local schools and facilities that help broaden and enliven their learning and contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' awareness of different cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom and around the world is less well developed because they are given fewer opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge.

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Great Finborough is a popular school with many parents and carers choosing for their children to travel from outside of the immediate area. 'It is a wonderful school with exceptional staff,' was a typical comment from a parent. Pupils are well cared for. Parents and carers feel their children are all known as individuals because the school is small. Typical parental comments include, 'Staff can't do enough to help,' 'The school takes particular care of children's emotional development,' and, 'I am particularly happy with the encouragement and support.' Pupils themselves feel very safe in school. Their awareness of how to stay safe is outstanding because pupils have many real-life opportunities to discuss safety, such as when climbing trees or building shelters in the woodland. Pupils behave particularly well in lessons. While a very small number of pupils misbehave occasionally, this is mainly during lunch and break times, when the range and choice of activities in the relatively crowded outside space is limited. Nevertheless, staff handled these situations well.

Governance is good because the governing body took a strategic approach to the challenges of the proposed re-organisation, and broadened their expertise to better meet them. Although new governors are not yet fully established, already improvements are clear. The governing body works very closely with school leaders so that future plans are carefully costed through prudent management. All resources, including staff, are very effectively deployed so the school gives good value for money. Leaders and managers drive school improvement well. They offer good practical support and guidance to those teachers who are relatively inexperienced. Support with lesson planning, for example, has helped to lay the foundation for good teaching. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the school grounds, in line with the planned proposals, to give pupils more varied opportunities in a more positive recreational environment, particularly at lunch and break times.
- Improve national and international links to fully prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children join Reception with skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical of their age. Whatever their starting points, they achieve well and make good progress. As a result, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 is above average and this good picture is maintained in Key Stage 2, so that by Year 4, pupils' attainment is above and, in many cases, well above that expected. Pupils enjoy reading and their attainment is particular high because the school teaches the skills very methodically and parents and carers support strongly at home. Pupils use their literacy skills well to aid their learning in other subjects. There are many example of high quality writing around

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the school. For example, following their visit to a woodland, pupils wrote lively, well constructed and sustained pieces of writing. This emphasis on first-hand experience makes a strong contribution to pupils’ learning and helps deepen their understanding. Work to improve pupils’ calculation skills, identified by the school as an area for development, is bearing fruit. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged appropriately and this enables them to make good progress. Pupils identified with autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties achieve well.

Pupils’ knowledge of aspects such as the importance of exercise contributes well to their good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. Because pupils have good basic skills, and share and cooperate well, are successfully developing the skills they need for future life. They are caring, thoughtful and generous in their support for charities such as the children’s hospice. Attendance is high with no persistent absence. The school has good procedures for tackling lateness.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is at the heart of pupils’ good progress. Thorough planning ensures activities are carefully matched to pupils’ levels and, where possible, interests so that they apply themselves well. Giving every pupil tasks at the right level, despite the wide ability range in the mixed-age classes, is key to the good teaching. Teaching assistants and volunteers ensure individuals and groups of pupils have the support

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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and guidance they need, when they need it. No time is wasted and pupils contribute well through their own good attitudes to learning. They are taught how to work in a team to come to thoughtful conclusions. They are encouraged to use their 'have-a-go' books to try and work things out for themselves.

Teachers give useful feedback, both written and verbal, that pupils reflect on maturely to modify their work. Pupils know their targets and use them effectively as they develop the skills to evaluate their learning. A wide range of technology is used very effectively to support the teaching. Pupils learn, for example, how to answer questions and give opinions instantly, and how to video their stories so they can listen and evaluate them for themselves.

A strong emphasis on developing skills enables pupils to learn how to solve problems by applying their existing knowledge in new and real-life situations. Very good links between subjects, including well organised opportunities to practise literacy, numeracy and computer skills, extend pupils' learning very effectively. Outstanding partnerships support and enhance pupils' progress. For example, strong external links enable pupils to experience sports and gymnastics that might otherwise not be provided on the school site. Pupils' musical skills and personal development are extended by performing in a concert hall. Many specialists, such as an archaeologist, support learning very well. Whenever possible, tasks are practical, interesting and relevant so pupils become engrossed. In history, for example, they 'freeze frame' the emotions of people living through the Second World War. They use 'rations' to make biscuits and learn dances popular at the time. In this way, pupils' knowledge and understanding of everyday life during this period of history is deepened. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum, football being particularly popular.

The school takes good care of pupils and this has a positive impact on their enjoyment, excellent sense of being safe and their learning. Parents rightly believe that staff know their children as individuals and consequently feel confident in the good care their children receive. Because the school works closely with outside agencies, the needs of pupils of different background and abilities are met well. Induction into school and between classes is smooth, so that pupils make consistently good progress academically and in their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

There is a strong sense of teamwork, and a shared commitment and ambition to tackle weaknesses and strive for improvement. Areas identified for improvement in the last inspection have been resolved successfully because the governing body and school leaders are effective. The governing body increasingly strikes the right balance between supporting and questioning the school, for example by participating in discussions about pupils' progress and challenging whether it is sufficient. Leaders form an effective team because they have skills that complement one another. The school takes a strong and successful stance against any form of discrimination and ensures pupils receive equal opportunities, whatever their background or abilities. Safeguarding is good and this is seen as paramount. Systems and procedures are clear, comprehensive and robust. Staff and the governing body are very diligent in checking the suitability of staff to work with children. Risk assessments are thorough.

Parents and carers are highly and actively engaged as partners in their children's education. There is a strong relationship with the school that makes a positive difference to pupils' academic and personal development. Parents are very well informed about any proposed changes, for example in the approach to teaching reading, which enables them to make a strong contribution to their children's learning. Community cohesion is satisfactory. It is strong within the school's cohesive community because it is actively promoted and this extends well into the locality, where pupils are given a good understanding of their roles, rights and responsibilities, particularly in their village. However, the promotion of community cohesion beyond the local area is more limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress, because of skilled teaching, so that these gaps are quickly closed. By the end of the Reception Year, most children reach and some exceed the goals expected of them. Children's independence is developed and encouraged well because they have a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children.

Careful and thorough planning ensures activities interest and engage children so they concentrate and persevere with their tasks. Regular assessments and 'learning journeys' record children's progress so that future activities build effectively on their learning. Staff form a very effective team so all children's needs are met. Access to the outdoors is good with a similarly good range of activities to arouse children's curiosity.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

More than half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, well above the national average. This consequently gives a full picture of their views. Parents and carers are generally positive. All those who returned a questionnaire state their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe, that teaching is good and that school helps them support their children's learning. A small minority of parents and carers are concerned about how the school handles unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Finborough 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 inspectors received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 89 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	84	8	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	72	14	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	54	18	36	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	68	15	30	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	62	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	56	17	34	5	10	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)	21	42	25	50	0	0	2	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	62	16	32	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	34	22	44	8	16	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	44	24	48	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	46	18	36	6	12	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	74	12	24	1	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	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 Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 3AQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school, and for sharing your thoughts and ideas. Thanks also to those of you who completed the questionnaire for us. You were very positive about your school. All of you feel your headteacher and senior staff do a good job, that you learn a lot in lessons and that the adults in your school care about you. You also said that your school helps you to be healthy. We agree with you that Great Finborough Primary is a good school. In particular, we found that:

- your curriculum is lively and interesting and you enjoy the activities you do
- your learning is supported by the wide range of excellent partnerships your school has
- you play your part wonderfully well in the life of your school and your villages
- you attend school very well and understand how to stay safe
- the school treats everyone the same and money is spent carefully.

We have asked your school to make two improvements. These are to:

- improve the school grounds so you have more to do at play and lunch times, and to make sure all of the space is used as well as possible
- give you more opportunities to find out about the people living in different and contrasting parts of our country and the rest of the world, so you have a better understanding of our multicultural society.

You can help too, by continuing to do your best in everything you do. With best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Robert Greatrex
Lead inspector

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