

Great Ellingham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120812
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380107
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Collier and David Jones
Headteacher	Heather Ware (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent approximately six hours observing a total of 11 lessons, taught by seven teachers or support staff. They met formally with five groups of pupils and informally with others. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the literacy leader, the special educational needs coordinator, the leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the specialist support assistant, a group of teachers and support staff, and the two Chairs of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, particularly by scrutinising pupils' work over the past academic year and looking at documentation relating to safeguarding pupils, school improvement and tracking pupils' achievements. Inspectors took account of the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires from 100 parents and carers, 140 pupils and 17 staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school in a rural location. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. In September 2011, the existing partnership with Rocklands School became a formal federation, with one governing body. As before, the executive headteacher leads both primary schools and each school retains its own budget.

Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than that found nationally and includes moderate learning difficulties and behavioural needs. There are six classes, five covering the two key stages and the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The school’s overall effectiveness is good, typified by pupils’ good progress and a strong trend of improvement over the past 18 months. The school is not yet outstanding because achievement in reading and science, the teaching of phonics (learning the sounds that letters make) and the use of assessment information are not yet as strong as other aspects of the school’s performance.
- Pupils’ good progress comes from good teaching and leads to above-average attainment in most subjects.
- Improvements in teaching and pupils’ learning are a result of a more robust and concerted approach by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to manage teachers’ performance, particularly their accountability for pupils’ attainment and progress. Although the use of assessment to track pupils’ achievements and inform teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, tracking progress across all subjects is not well developed and subject leaders and teachers are not yet making full use of assessment information.
- Pupils and staff value highly the care and support they receive from one another and this contributes significantly to pupils’ knowledge and understanding of staying safe, their good behaviour, the pride that they have in their contribution to school life and the calm, learning ethos that pervades the school.
- The headteacher has made many changes since her appointment and leads a strong, committed staff team who readily accept and respond to the challenges. Consequently, pupils’ progress and attainment have considerably improved.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils’ achievements in reading and science, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:

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- revising the teaching of phonics and reading to reflect current good practice in adopting a systematic and consistent approach throughout the school
 - ensuring that pupils have a good record in their books of what they have learned to reinforce their understanding in science.
- Improve assessment so that it makes a significant contribution to teaching, the work of subject leaders and the strategic overview of pupils' progress by:
- refining the tracking system so that it provides a clear picture of pupils' progress over time and whether their achievements are good enough
 - tracking pupils' progress, particularly in science to provide a broader picture of pupils' academic development
 - developing the work of subject leaders and that of the special educational needs coordinator so that they are more accountable for how well the curriculum facilitates improved pupils' progress in their subject areas
 - developing teachers' understanding of how assessment can be integral to their planning of pupils' learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good because they become confident learners who achieve well from their starting points to reach above-average attainment in most areas of their learning by the end of Key Stage 2. There is a strong trend of improvement over the past three years following a significant dip in pupils' performance after the previous inspection, which led to inadequate progress in Key Stage 2 in 2008 and 2009. Inspection findings are endorsed by parents and carers who rightly believe that their children make good progress and enjoy their education.

Pupils join the Reception Year with a wide range of skills that are broadly similar to those found nationally for their age group. They make good progress and by the end of Reception enter Year 1 confident in all main areas of learning. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, good progress is maintained to the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements in mathematics and writing are stronger than in reading and science. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is average. The gap between pupils' reading and writing skills has narrowed and pupils now make good progress in writing. Their writing has significantly improved as seen in their books across all subjects. This improvement in literacy and the increased proportion of pupils attaining higher levels at both key stages are a result of effective actions by leaders and managers. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory and assessment of these skills is not as well developed as for English and mathematics. Their work in books is not always a good enough record of their learning in science.

Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those known to be entitled to free

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school meals achieve equally as well as others. They respond well to the additional, good-quality and well-timed opportunities that develop their self-esteem and boost their academic skills. Pupils with behavioural needs often make good progress in their ability to adopt strategies to overcome their difficulties, enabling them to engage with the teaching, enjoy their learning and make good progress.

Pupils greatly enjoy their learning. Pupils of all ages, abilities and needs express their enthusiasm for learning. They value the improvements to the curriculum, with themes and opportunities that make learning fun, such as going out in the snow to enact Scott's expedition to the Antarctic. These improvements have developed the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum, including bringing boys' writing more in-line with that of the girls.

Quality of teaching

Most teaching is at least good and is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, effective behaviour management, good choice of activities and skilful use of questions that move pupils' learning on. Parents and carers are right to be confident about the quality of teaching. The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment is a mixed one. Although used successfully to assess how well pupils are learning during the course of a lesson and to adapt the lesson accordingly, teachers' marking and their use of tracking information to inform their planning of pupils' learning is of too variable a quality. This is partly because some of the relatively new developments in tracking pupils' progress at the strategic, senior-management, level have not yet filtered through to class-teacher level. Teachers' marking has improved and some is of good quality. For example, pupils in Class 3 explained that they have to read the teacher's comments before they start the next piece of work and enjoy the challenge that this presents. They could show how they had improved their use of capital letters, punctuation and sentences. In other classes, marking is either of inconsistent quality or at a level that simply reinforces effort rather than how to improve the learning.

Teachers do not listen to pupils reading frequently enough in Key Stage 2. This, and the lack of a consistently good quality of phonics teaching throughout the school, mean that some pupils do not have the confidence or skills to sound out complex words in reading. They prefer to use other, less effective, strategies when confronted with unfamiliar words and, consequently, they do not make the good progress in reading that they do in other skills.

The teaching and additional support provided to pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs ensure that skills developed when working in small groups and individually are reinforced and developed as part of whole-class teaching. Similarly, support in class prioritises pupils' independent access to learning at their own level of ability. Additional support programmes are well targeted to be timely and time limited. Academic development is supported well alongside pupils' social and emotional well-being. Specialist support work makes a particularly important contribution in this respect.

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Very positive relationships and teachers' well considered choice of activities support pupils' personal development well. A wide range of educational visits and the first-hand experiences of visitors help pupils to value cultural and social differences. Pupils have a very keen sense of how fortunate they are in relation to others. They have initiated their own projects to raise considerable sums of money to support children overseas. A few parents and carers would like the school to provide more after-school activities but inspectors found there are already plenty on offer.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' typically good behaviour and safety are characterised by a well-developed understanding of how to manage risk and that adults and pupils should behave in a respectful and caring manner towards one another. Pupils know that adults are responsible for securing the building and that everyone must behave responsibly, yet urgently, when the fire alarm sounds. The curriculum and teaching consistently reinforce moral and social responsibilities, and pupils respond well to the good role models of staff. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on additional roles, particularly in Year 6, and younger pupils aspire to follow in their footsteps because they appreciate the social rewards and responsibilities that this brings. Pupils learn from the start how to take responsibility for being in the right place at the right time doing the right thing. Children in Class 1 know about safety in physical education. Pupils of all ages speak very knowledgeably about what constitutes bullying and the physical and verbal forms that it can take. Bullying happens rarely. Instances are reported and recorded appropriately, and addressed effectively. Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average.

Parents and carers endorse inspection evidence that their children are well cared for and most believe that pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils, themselves, fully endorse this view. Pupils are very supportive of one another, including an understanding that some struggle more than others from time-to-time with educational or behavioural difficulties, and when friendships break down.

Leadership and management

The appointment of the current headteacher and the subsequent move to formal federation with the primary school in the neighbouring village have galvanised the work of the school. Redefining the roles and responsibilities of senior staff led to more delegation and increased accountability for school improvement. The roles and responsibilities of subject leaders and special educational needs were also revised. Appropriate plans are in place to develop these areas of responsibility, particularly to go in tandem with improvements in assessment and the curriculum, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact. The performance management of teachers is thorough and rooted in the part that they play in improving the progress of pupils in their class. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning have improved.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and managers were asked to improve

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pupils' attainment in mathematics, assessment and the curriculum. All of these things have been addressed successfully and place the school in a good position to make further improvement. Pupils' progress in mathematics is now good and their attainment above the national average. Changes to the curriculum provide pupils with memorable learning experiences and have a significant impact on pupils' engagement and enthusiasm for learning. Improvements in pupils' writing skills are attributable to good, well-planned opportunities in different subjects to practise skills learned in literacy lessons. The full impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement is not yet realised but moving in a positive direction. Although the use of assessment by teachers and subject leaders is not yet fully effective, it has come a long way – with tracking of pupils' progress and teachers assessing pupils' learning in lessons now well established. Assessment is used well to identify and address any underachievement in English and mathematics. This effective practice ensures equal opportunity to good-quality outcomes and enables all pupils to achieve equally well.

Discrimination in relation to cultural differences is tackled well through the curriculum as is pupils' awareness of what to do if they come across any, including bullying. Leaders and managers keep a watchful eye on potential discrimination against those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and on underachievement or social disadvantage. They ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities.

The priority, quite rightly, has been to secure good practice in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' skills in other subjects, particularly science and information and communication technology, are not yet tracked with the same level of detail and, therefore, do not provide enough specific information to inform developments in these subjects.

The governing body play a full part in the work of the school. Governors are well informed and have high aspirations for pupils' performance. Their attention to ensuring pupils' welfare and safety is good, including their commitment to training in safeguarding children. All requirements are met in this respect.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Ellingham Primary School, Attleborough, NR17 1HX.

You may remember those very wet days recently when I came with Mrs Beale to inspect your school. We remember how thoughtful you were towards us, how keen you were to talk to us and how much we valued the conversations that we had with you. Thank you for your contribution to the inspection, including filling in the questionnaire. Please pass on our thanks to your parents and carers for filling in their questionnaire too. All of these things helped us to make our judgements and this letter sets out what we found.

Great Ellingham is a good school because the staff make sure that you make good academic progress. They help you to be safe, the teaching is good and so is your behaviour. The changes made by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body have improved your school and the questionnaires told us that you and your parents and carers feel very positively about what your school provides.

As always there are things that can improve. We have asked the staff and governors to improve your skills in phonics, reading and science, and to track how well you are doing in all subjects. We would like you to suggest ways that you can help staff with these improvements.

We wish you well in all that you aspire to achieve in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

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