

Greens Norton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121974
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380373
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	David Shears

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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Ward
Headteacher	Jan Pickering
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Shears

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited eight lessons taught by four different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning documents, assessment data and pupils' work. He analysed the questionnaires returned by 47 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Greens Norton Church of England Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average, as is the proportion who are at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It has gained the anti-bullying foundation level accreditation, the Activemark, the Impact award, International Schools intermediate level and Healthy Schools status.

A breakfast club, managed by the school, is available on the school site and was inspected. An after-school care facility also runs on the school site and is externally managed: this provision is subject to separate inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because targets set for the progress of pupils are not challenging enough and, consequently, most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, there are signs of improvement this year, particularly in reading. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with the national averages in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where lessons are good, teachers plan creative activities to engage and enthuse pupils. However, in some lessons pupils do not receive work that meets their learning needs. Skills being taught in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are not always reinforced in other subjects at the same time. Teachers do not consistently check in lessons how well pupils are learning, and teaching assistants do not use questions carefully enough to promote pupils' thinking skills.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and have positive attitudes towards their work. They feel that adults in school keep them safe and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is higher than the national average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders provide a strong lead in pupils' personal well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, pupils' progress targets are not high enough and monitoring does not focus sufficiently on the progress of pupils. The management of teaching, including the management of performance, is satisfactory. While interventions support pupils at risk of underachievement, their outcomes are not sufficiently checked.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress so that both are consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - assessment data is consistently used to plan and meet the learning needs of all pupils through the development of their skills
 - teachers monitor learning during lessons and provide further support or challenge
 - teaching assistants are more effective in using carefully crafted questions to develop pupils' thinking skills.

- Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum by ensuring that skills being taught in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are concurrently reinforced in other subjects.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - targets for the progress of all pupils are sufficiently challenging so that they make good progress
 - the monitoring of teaching focuses more on the progress of pupils in lessons
 - all interventions that support groups of pupils effectively challenge them to make accelerated progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children begin school with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with age-related expectations. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the rate of progress is beginning to rise this year because, in reading, teaching is now meeting the learning needs of pupils more effectively. For example, in one lesson where pupils were learning to use more exciting words in their writing, pupils of average ability were finding more interesting adjectives while more-able pupils were exploring using metaphors in their writing. However, sometimes teaching does not make the new skill being learnt explicit enough for pupils to make good progress. For example, in a lesson where pupils were learning about connectives, although writing was modelled for pupils and included reminders about other elements such as punctuation, it did not specifically focus on adding connectives. Another key reason for the improving progress in reading is the introduction of a daily phonics and reading time for all pupils throughout the school in ability groups. The result of this is that attainment in reading has risen from average in previous years to above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is satisfactory because they receive adequate, rather than good, support to meet their particular needs. This is also true for other groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children were making good progress. The inspection found that pupils

are currently making satisfactory progress and that it is improving this year.

Quality of teaching

Good relationships between staff and pupils are evident in every class. This is because teachers prepare interesting activities, often related to the current topic, to engage and enthuse pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used well to complement the teaching, and pupils are involved by discussing questions in pairs before reflecting their views back to the whole class. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to work independently and often help each other in their learning. Pupils have curricular targets in English and mathematics; while they are able to identify the level that they are working at, pupils are not as clear about the next steps in learning that they need to take to reach their targets. Marking is completed well in all classes and teachers give encouraging comments and identify how work could have been improved. There are often opportunities for pupils to respond to the marking.

While pupils are told the objectives for each lesson, these are sometimes couched in terms of what they are going to do rather than the skill that they are going to learn. Similarly, the work is sometimes based on different activities for groups of pupils rather than focusing on their next steps in learning. Teachers do not always check carefully enough during lessons whether pupils are making good progress and, where necessary, intervening such as correcting misconceptions or providing further challenge. Teaching assistants give satisfactory rather than good support because they do not always ask challenging questions to help pupils, including those who are disabled and have special educational needs, to develop their thinking skills further.

The curriculum is developing well, including providing opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and there are clear links in lessons to the current topic. However, there are not always enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills that they have recently learnt. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are taught well and most pupils agree. The inspection found that, while there is some good teaching and it is improving, there are still too many lessons where the teaching is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well in lessons and are eager to learn. This is because relationships between staff and pupils are strong and there is a positive learning atmosphere that encourages pupils to 'have a go'. Occasionally, when teaching does not fully engage pupils well enough, a few pupils lose concentration. Nevertheless, pupils are able to work together and support each other in their learning. Pupils behave well in the playground and enjoy spending time playing games or talking together. While pupils acknowledge that there are occasional incidents, they are confident that adults around them deal with these successfully and so they feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, whether that is in school, such as listening carefully to their teachers, or at other times, such as being aware of stranger danger and not giving personal details on the internet. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, such as racial bullying and cyber

bullying. They know how to make the right choices, and display polite and courteous behaviour. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that pupils behave well and the majority of pupils agree. As a result, all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are safe and the large majority of pupils agree.

The breakfast club that operates at the school provides a positive start to the school day. Pupils enjoy eating and socialising together in an environment that ensures their safety and promotes their social skills well.

The attendance of pupils is higher than the national average and the proportion of persistent absence is low. This is due to the consistent application of the school's policies.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, informed by their self-evaluation procedures. Identified areas for improvement are cited in a plan showing how they are to be addressed although this lacks detail, particularly in how these actions are to be monitored and evaluated. Overall targets for groups of pupils are too low. This is because the school tracks pupils in terms of making at least satisfactory progress and there is not enough focus on targeting good progress. Consequently, teaching is only adequately challenging.

Nevertheless, leaders and managers have made some improvements since the last inspection. The weakest teaching has now been eradicated and the quality of the curriculum is improving. The focus on the teaching of reading is having a positive effect so that more pupils are now making better progress this year. As a result of this increasing success, the school has recently introduced a similar system of groups to explore calculation skills, although it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this. The proportion of pupils making two levels of progress in Years 3 to 6 has risen this year. Attendance has been maintained as above the national average. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve.

The school actively tackles discrimination and is committed to promoting equality. Regular meetings to discuss the progress of pupils have enabled the school to identify those at risk of underachievement. Pupils are given extra support, although the majority are still making satisfactory progress, which is not sufficiently strong enough to enable them to catch up. Both senior and middle leaders are involved with monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this informs appropriate professional development and performance management. However, it is not focused enough on the progress that pupils make and consequently areas for development do not sufficiently address this. Members of the governing body are supportive of the school and take part in some monitoring activities. However, their understanding of how well the school is performing is not accurate because they do not have clear information about the proportion of pupils making good progress. The school has good relationships with parents and carers, the large majority of whom have positive views of the school. Nevertheless, the governing body recognises the need for it to

be more pro-active in seeking the views of parents and carers.

A strength of the school's leadership is in the pastoral care of pupils. In particular, pupils with particular difficulties, such as those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are supported well. They make good progress in their confidence and self-esteem as a result of working closely with the school's learning mentor. The school promotes pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning and attitudes and are encouraged to think of and actively support those who need help. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.

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.



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greens Norton Church of England Primary School, Towcester, NN12 8DD

Thank you for the welcome that I received when I visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you all and find out about your school. You told me that you liked coming to school because you learn lots of new things and make good friends. I was particularly pleased that you all feel safe because the adults in school look after you well and that you also know how to keep yourselves safe.

I found that you go to a school that gives you a satisfactory education. This is because most of you make satisfactory progress in your learning. To make sure that you all make good progress in every class, I have asked the governors, headteacher and teachers to make sure that:

- all of you always have work that is challenging enough
- teaching assistants help you to think carefully about your work by asking clear questions and enable you to make quicker progress
- you have regular opportunities to practise what you have been learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication
- they regularly check that you are making good progress in lessons.

You can help by working hard and telling your teachers how well you are getting on, particularly if you think you could be given more challenging work.

Thank you again for looking after me so well.

Yours sincerely

David Shears
Lead inspector

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