

Greenacres Primary School

Rutland, Off York Road, Harlescott Grange, Shrewsbury, SY1 3QG

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is too variable across the school and much requires improvement. As a result, pupils' achievement is not high enough.
- Although standards are beginning to rise in English and mathematics, too few pupils reach the levels of which they are capable in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make sure that learning activities are challenging enough for pupils of different abilities, especially the most able.
- Some teachers talk for too long, which reduces opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills to the task at hand.
- Teaching assistants are not always used to best effect and a valuable resource is sometimes wasted.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to find things out for themselves or to develop skills that help them become more independent learners.
- Marking, feedback and targets for learning are variable in quality so pupils do not confidently understand how to improve.
- The judgements of leaders and managers about the quality of teaching and how well the school is working are too generous.
- Improvement plans are not sufficiently focused on the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement in writing is improving rapidly as additional resources have been targeted well.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning make sure that the school is a calm and safe place in which to work and play.
- The pastoral support for pupils and families in vulnerable circumstances is excellent.
- Leaders and managers have worked tirelessly to limit the impact of high staff turnover.
- More consistent staffing is starting to pay dividends in boosting standards of care and in securing better achievement.
- Parents and carers, alongside their children, hold the school in high regard.

Information about this inspection

- Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed. All classroom teachers present during the inspection were observed teaching. The inspectors undertook four joint lesson observations with the headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteachers, staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of reading skills, heard individual pupils read and observed pupils reading in lessons.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, scrutinised the school's tracking records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought via the online questionnaire, Parent View. There were insufficient responses to the questionnaire to assist inspectors. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at various times and took account of the school's own recent surveys of the views of parents, carers and pupils.
- The views of staff were sought through a questionnaire. In total, 13 questionnaires were studied.

Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tracey Kneale	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- A high proportion of pupils are eligible for support from the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very few pupils are taught through local authority alternative provision, on a part-time basis, at the Harlescott Tuition Centre.
- Over recent times, particularly since the last inspection, there has been significant turbulence in staffing.
- The school has recently joined The Severn Community Cooperative Learning Trust with other schools and colleges in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment and achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics, so that the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress compare favourably with those seen nationally by:
 - improving the consistency of the teaching of reading skills across the school through focused training and the sharing of existing good practice
 - ensuring that all of the most able pupils reach the levels of which they are capable in English and mathematics by making sure that tasks are set at the right level of challenge
 - improving further the provision for pupils supported by the pupil premium so that the gap in achievement between them and their peers narrows more rapidly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is all at least good throughout the school, by:
 - making sure that all teachers have a secure understanding of the components of good and outstanding teaching and learning
 - improving leaders' skills in observing teaching so that judgements are accurate and feedback given to teachers is focused on pupils' learning
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and giving pupils personalised targets that help them to check their progress systematically
 - ensuring that teachers deploy teaching assistants carefully by defining their role in each lesson more precisely
 - sharing and developing the existing good practice in marking and increasing opportunities for pupils to develop and apply independent learning skills.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management, so that the drive for improvement is robustly focused on pupils' learning, by:
 - holding teachers closely to account for pupils' progress through the half-termly progress

meetings

- improving the accuracy of the school’s self-evaluation and making sure that improvement plans are tightly focused on tracking and boosting pupils’ learning
 - supporting governors further in tracking the achievement and attainment of different groups of pupils across the school so that they hold more closely to account all leaders for the progress of pupils, especially in reading and mathematics.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Achievement over time is variable and assessments to track children's progress are not always used well enough to make sure that all children progress rapidly, especially in developing their early skills in reading and mathematics. The most able children especially do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 is variable but is improving because teaching is now good. The teaching of reading skills is inconsistent across the school although progress improves by Year 6. That said, the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress in reading, overall, does not compare favourably with that seen nationally.
- Achievement in mathematics is rising but the pattern is inconsistent. Where additional resources and funding have been well targeted, for example in Years 2 and 6, pupils' progress in mathematics is improving rapidly. As a result, the very large majority of pupils in these year groups now make better than expected progress. This is not the case, however, in other year groups across the school.
- The picture of achievement in writing is much more consistent across the school. Initiatives to improve pupils' attainment and progress in writing have been broadly successful, especially in Key Stage 2. More pupils are now on track to reach the higher levels because more focused use of additional funding and intervention are now paying dividends.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, make rates of progress similar to their peers. As a result, their attainment in English and in mathematics mirrors that seen across the school.
- The additional pupil premium funding has been used well recently in driving up levels of progress in some year groups, especially in writing and mathematics, but there is more to do to target the funding more precisely and thus increase the consistency needed to raise achievement throughout the school. There are signs that the gap between the performance of different groups of pupils is reducing but, overtime, it is not closing at a fast enough rate. That said, in 2013, pupils supported by this additional funding made better progress than other pupils in the school so that they were one term ahead in English and half a term ahead in mathematics.
- A strength of the school's provision is its considerable efforts to support pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable in overcoming the academic and social barriers which they face. As a result of good one-to-one support and sensitive integration, these pupils' social development and achievement from challenging starting points are, at times, good.
- The early impact of the new funding for sport and physical education is evident in teachers' increased confidence and competence in teaching physical education, especially in gymnastics and dance.
- Pupils attending alternative provision on a part-time basis make good progress because they are well supported in both settings.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Too much teaching requires improvement for achievement to be good overall. Recent turbulence in staffing has made it more difficult to improve the impact of teaching so that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage mirrors that seen across the school. Teachers do not always make it clear what pupils are expected to learn and targets are too broad to help individual pupils really focus on their learning. Across the school, there are too few opportunities for challenge and learning activities are not always well designed to help pupils of different abilities to make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children show curiosity and a keenness to learn but they are not given enough guidance on choosing and tackling activities that make them think and apply their developing language skills. Adults provide too much direction and do not monitor the children with sufficient rigour while they are working in groups so that there is an imbalance of play and directed activities.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information, including learning from previous lessons, to plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils are given work that is too easy for them and not enough is done to extend the learning of the most able. Opportunities are missed to question pupils about their learning and, consequently, misconceptions are not always identified and addressed as quickly as they should be.
- At times, teachers talk for too long and pupils are not given the time to tackle tasks in depth. Teaching assistants are not always well deployed, especially when the teacher is leading the whole class.
- In the best lessons, the working relationship between adults is seamless. This was the case in a mathematics lesson where pupils were tackling a range of measuring tasks using estimation and weighing equipment to record their answers. The two teaching assistants were well briefed by the teacher so that the pupils they supported were fully engaged and able to tackle the tasks with good levels of success. Their peers were enthusiastically tackling tasks that were well matched to their stage of learning. This good practice is not a common enough feature across the school.
- While good examples exist of marking and feedback which precisely guide pupils forward in taking the next step, these are not consistent. On occasions, when positive feedback and learning prompts are provided, pupils are not given enough time to respond to them.
- Targets for learning are too broad and the timescales are too long. Pupils are not consistently set individualised targets so cannot track their own progress from lesson to lesson or over time. As a result, many pupils do not know what they have to do next to move their work to a higher level.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop and apply independent learning skills, for example, by solving open-ended problems, are too few across the school. Furthermore, pupils are too reliant on adult support and learning aids, which limit their opportunities to widen their vocabulary and to learn to use a thesaurus, dictionary or internet search engine.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good across the school. Pupils are known as individuals and they respond well to adults' encouragement and support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their improving attendance. They are proud of their school and the part they play in making it a harmonious and cohesive community. One pupil commented, 'I feel that I belong.' Another reported that, 'My teacher makes lessons fun.'
- Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. On the rare occasion when a pupil loses concentration and goes off task, adults respond well and ensure any disruption is minimal and short lived.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning play a key part in boosting achievement because they work hard in lessons, even when the activities and teaching are not challenging enough.
- Parents, carers and their children agree that the school's approach to pastoral care is really strong. Staff go the extra mile to support families and children in a range of ways. For example, recently introduced workshops in writing and mathematics help parents and carers, working alongside their children, to increase their understanding of current learning methods. These have been very well attended and greatly valued.
- Bullying of any kind is rare and pupils confidently report that adults respond swiftly and effectively. They know how to protect themselves from cyber bullying and understand the risks when using the internet and when in the outside world. Some pupils have received training in supporting others and through the 'Agony Aunt and Uncle' boxes have sensitively helped those who have had particular problems.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because levels of achievement are not high enough and too much teaching requires improvement. Recent improvements in writing across the school and, in some year groups, in mathematics clearly point to the school's capacity to improve further.
- Leaders and managers have guided the school through a significant period of turbulence in staffing, which has slowed down the school's push to boost levels of attainment and achievement. New subject leaders are finding their feet in driving through improvements. For example, the appointment of a specialist sports teacher, using the new funding for sport and physical education, is helping the subject leader for physical education to drive up the quality of teaching. As a result, teachers are already improving their teaching of gymnastics and dance.
- The headteachers and governors have too optimistic a view of the school's effectiveness. Self-evaluation is too generous and is not based on astute analysis of the progress of all groups across the school. Whole year-group targets for English and mathematics are too broad and do not set high enough expectations for teachers or pupils. School improvement plans, while detailed and comprehensive, are not precisely enough focused on how best to improve teaching and learning over time.
- The school has received high level of support from the local authority and plans are in place to continue with specific support to improve the tracking of pupils' progress, improving the quality of teaching and in strengthening leadership and management.
- Pupils are offered a sound range of learning opportunities through a broad and balanced

curriculum. This is enhanced further by themed topics across the school. The improvements seen in writing have been further strengthened by the school's initiative to boost writing skills across the curriculum.

- The school's work to support pupils and families in vulnerable circumstances, has had a profound and lasting impact on improving pupils' engagement in lessons, raising levels of attendance and in strengthening home-school relationships. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and its leadership. One commented, 'I love this school. It's fantastic.'
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. Key strengths are in pupils' moral and social development, which can be seen in the good relationships, positive attitudes to learning and pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Links are now being established with a school in South Africa to widen pupils' awareness of cultural and global issues.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Though there are vacancies on the governing body, governors are working diligently to keep apace with current developments and obligations in education. They have undertaken an audit of their skills and attended a good range of training activities to boost their capacity to hold leaders to account.
- Governors are conscious that they are too reliant on the headteachers for information about pupils' progress. That said, they are beginning to strengthen their grasp of the available tracking data to check more thoroughly on levels of attainment and achievement for different groups and subjects.
- Governors are closely involved in using the performance management procedures so that salary progression is firmly based on merit. Performance targets for the headteachers are challenging but achievable.
- Governors soundly monitor the school's finances and know that pupil premium funding has been used, on occasions, well. For example, the provision of additional teaching and small group support has improved levels of achievement in mathematics and writing. Alongside the senior leaders, they have plans in place to more astutely track the impact of this funding and that newly provided for sports and physical education.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Leaders and governors are fully focused on ensuring that the promotion of equality opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and that discrimination is never tolerated.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123592
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	427270

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Harding
Headteacher	Nicola & Simon Hey (joint)
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2010
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