

Greenfields Primary School

Ellesborough Close, Watford, Hertfordshire WD19 6QH

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not maintained the good quality of education evident at the previous inspection.
- School improvement planning is not effective enough. Leaders do not analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately, and improvement plans are underdeveloped.
- The quality of teaching is no longer consistently good throughout the school. Leaders' monitoring does not have a clear impact on improving it.
- Some learning is not well planned and does not follow an appropriate developmental sequence.
- A very small number of pupils say that they do not feel that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Subject leadership is not fully developed. Leaders have little impact on raising standards in their subject areas.
- Staff do not have consistently high expectations of pupils. As a result, some pupils do not behave or try as well as they should.
- Handwriting is not taught effectively. As a result, some pupils do not develop a neat and efficient handwriting style when they should.
- Absence rates are too high. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Leaders do not use assessment information effectively. Some pupils do not make the strong progress they should because teaching is not good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Governance is becoming more effective. Governors now have a realistic idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have ensured that a suitable curriculum is in place. Pupils enjoy their learning as a result.
- The early years provision has improved greatly and is now a strength of the school.
- Leaders have eradicated the very weakest teaching and some teaching is good. Where this is the case, pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that:
 - self-evaluation is analytical and identifies the school’s key weaknesses
 - school improvement plans focus on the most important priorities
 - leaders’ monitoring of the quality of teaching has a clear impact on improving it
 - assessment information is used effectively to raise outcomes for pupils
 - leaders have a clear impact on improving standards in the subjects they are responsible for.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good throughout the school, by ensuring that all teaching staff:
 - have consistently high expectations of how pupils behave, what they can achieve and how they should present their work
 - develop effective ways of managing pupils’ behaviour
 - plan learning in developmentally appropriate sequences
 - teach handwriting effectively.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing absence and persistent absence so that attendance is at least in line with the national average
 - putting measures in place to restore the confidence of the very small proportion of pupils and parents and carers who have concerns about bullying.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not maintained the good quality of education provided by the school. The quality of teaching is no longer consistently good and pupils' outcomes have fallen as a result.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation are not sufficiently well developed. The school's self-evaluation summary is descriptive, rather than analytical, and does not diagnose the school's weaknesses well enough. Similarly, the school's action plan does not focus strongly enough on the most important priorities and has not helped to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Leaders have had too little impact on improving the quality of teaching. Although monitoring activities take place, such as looking at pupils' books and observing lessons, there is little evidence that these activities make any difference. Leaders identify areas that need to be improved but they do not then follow up to check that they have improved.
- Leaders do not use assessment information well enough. They have chosen to collect assessment information in the form of data, but they do not analyse this well enough for it to help them to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The development of subject leadership is in its infancy. Leaders' work is not yet sufficiently well focused on improving the quality of teaching and on raising standards in the subjects that they are responsible for. 'Green shoots' are starting to appear but leaders' work has not yet had time to have any great impact on school improvement.
- Recruitment of suitable staff has been and continues to be a significant challenge for the school. Leaders have been effective in ensuring that the school remains fully staffed. Leaders are also well aware of where teaching is weaker in the school. There is evidence that leaders have tackled the weakest teaching effectively.
- Overall, the pupil premium grant is spent effectively. The funding is used in a range of appropriate ways, such as providing counselling and other therapies for pupils, as necessary. Leaders are able to provide anecdotal evidence of the impact of the way the funding is spent. However, they have not looked closely enough at whether spending is having a direct impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's previous inspection found that the early years provision required improvement. Leaders have tackled this area well. Suitable support was secured from local authority advisers and this has been effective in ensuring that early years provision has improved.
- The school's curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Leaders have found that the school's topic-based approach motivates pupils and keeps them interested in the subjects they learn about. The school's curriculum is enhanced by regular educational visits to places of interests that are linked to the topic pupils are learning about, such as trips to the seaside and to the Verulamium Museum in St Albans.
- Leaders ensure that a range of extra-curricular activities are available to pupils. The eldest pupils are given the opportunity to attend residential visits in both Year 5 and

Year 6. Clubs run at lunchtime and after school, with opportunities available for pupils from all year groups. All pupils in Year 4 have a weekly tenor horn lesson. Some pupils go on to have individual instrumental lessons with peripatetic staff.

- Leaders have chosen to use specialist teachers for some subjects such as French, physical education and art. Leaders have found that this approach works well, and outcomes have improved as a result of teachers' strong subject knowledge. For example, French is taught very well because the French teacher is a native speaker who models the sounds and nuances of the language accurately and clearly for pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is becoming increasingly effective. Governors now have a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is beginning to enable them to hold leaders to account more closely.
- Records of governing body meetings show that governors are now focusing on the right things. They know that the quality of teaching and attendance need to improve and that outcomes need to rise. They now ask much more challenging questions of leaders to check whether and to what extent progress is being made in these areas.
- Governors have not ensured that all pupils are provided with the full-time education that they are entitled to.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. Leaders have ensured that this key area of the school's work has a high profile. As a result, recruitment processes are robust and all the necessary checks are made to ensure that only suitable adults are allowed to work with children.
- The headteacher has an excellent understanding of her role as the school's designated safeguarding lead. She is deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils are safe. The headteacher responds appropriately to child protection concerns that staff raise. She does not hesitate to take action to protect children when necessary.
- The school's child protection processes are appropriate and well established. Leaders ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training when they join the school and that this is updated regularly. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns, no matter how trivial they may seem in isolation. Staff know how to report their concerns and do so promptly and appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school is inconsistent. While the teaching in some classes is strong and pupils make good progress, in other classes this is not the case. The good quality of teaching evident at the time of the previous inspection has not been maintained.
- Where the quality of teaching is weaker, low-level disruptive behaviour sometimes disturbs lessons. Teachers do not use behaviour management techniques well enough

to ensure that pupils behave well at all times. Where this is the case, teachers' expectations of how pupils should behave are not high enough.

- In some classes, learning is not planned effectively. Teachers do not plan sequences of learning so that pupils develop new knowledge in an appropriate order. For example, in mathematics, pupils in some classes are given harder work to do followed by easier work. Where this is the case, there does not appear to be a logical progression from simple through to more challenging ideas and concepts. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their learning that slow the progress they make.
- Handwriting is not taught well enough. As a result, some pupils do not orientate their letters correctly and many do not develop a neat, joined handwriting style during key stage 2, as they should. The handwriting in many pupils' exercise books is underdeveloped and the presentation of their work is poor as a result.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers explain tasks clearly so that pupils understand fully what is expected of them. Teachers ensure that tasks are appropriate and matched well to what they want pupils to learn. They also ensure that tasks capture pupils' imagination and interests.
- In some classes, teachers have high expectations both of how hard pupils should try and of how well they should behave. When this is the case, teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. For example, they use praise appropriately to encourage good behaviour and they make the consequences of poor behaviour very clear.
- Some teachers ensure that pupils' individual needs are met very well, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They assess pupils carefully so that they know exactly what pupils already know and can do, and what they need to learn next. They plan work for pupils at different levels so that it provides the right degree of challenge.
- In some classes, resources and equipment are used very well to enhance teaching. This is particularly true in mathematics, where pupils have been taught to use a range of equipment to help them to solve problems and to calculate correctly. This enables pupils to be more successful in learning mathematics and to make better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A very small minority of pupils and a minority of parents are concerned about bullying. They do not feel that the school deals with bullying effectively. Inspectors were satisfied that there is little bullying at Greenfields and that incidents are dealt with effectively when they do occur. However, it is a concern that some pupils do not feel safe from bullying.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils trust staff and know that they can talk to them about any worries and problems they might have. The school has a wide range of measures in place to support pupils' social and emotional needs. These

measures help to keep pupils safe.

- Almost all pupils feel safe and happy at school. Most parents that responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed that their children are safe, happy and well looked after at school.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. They are confident to speak to visitors and are keen to talk about their school. Pupils are well mannered and respectful towards adults and each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have allowed the use of part-time timetables for a very small number of pupils of statutory school age. These arrangements are long term and not time limited. This means that some pupils are not provided with the full-time education that they are entitled to.
- Rates of attendance are far too low and persistent absence is a particular concern. Some absence is for justifiable medical reasons but too much is not. Until very recently, leaders and governors had not done enough to tackle absence and to improve attendance.
- Leaders have recently started to take more decisive action to tackle persistent absence. Several 'breach' letters have been issued to parents who have not met their legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Leaders are now in a position to issue fixed penalty notices to parents of pupils who are persistently absent without due cause.
- Pupils usually behave well and follow the school's rules. Classrooms are generally orderly places, although there is some low-level disruption when the quality of teaching is weaker. Pupils behave sensibly and play well together at break and lunchtimes.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make strong progress throughout the school because the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Where teaching is weaker, pupils make less progress. The work in their exercise books is not of the same good quality as that of pupils where teaching is stronger.
- Over time, this has had a negative impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Results of the key stage 2 national tests have shown a deteriorating trend in reading and writing in recent years, and particularly so in mathematics.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates. Where the quality of teaching is better, disadvantaged pupils make better progress. However, their progress is not as good as other pupils nationally. The provision of therapeutic approaches, such as counselling and Lego therapy, has helped some disadvantaged pupils to become 'better learners' and, as a result, to make better progress.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress from their individual starting points. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are usually met. The extent of the progress this group of pupils make is unclear because approaches to measuring the small steps of progress these pupils make are underdeveloped.
- This downward trend in progress and attainment has now been halted. Teachers' assessments, carried out alongside the national tests, show a much-improved picture this year. Results of the key stage 2 national tests are expected to be much closer to the national average in 2018.
- In some year groups, pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They also make strong progress in a range of other subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils do well in French and art because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils show a keen interest in their learning and are encouraged to try hard and to do their best.

Early years provision

Good

- Improving the early years provision was an area for improvement from the previous inspection. Leaders have focused well on this area and taken appropriate action to develop the weaker areas. As a result, the early years provision is now good and is a strength of the school.
- The early years provision is led well. As a result, children now make good progress from their individual starting points. Leaders have a thorough and accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and areas that still need to improve. Suitable plans are in place for developing the provision further and leaders' ambitions are high.
- Staff provide a good range of purposeful activities for children, both indoors and outside. They think carefully about children's interests and their developmental needs when planning learning. This means that activities capture children's interest and help them to make good progress.
- Staff focus well on teaching children phonics in order for them to develop early reading and writing skills. This work is successful and, at the end of the academic year, children are starting to write in simple and increasingly accurate sentences. For example, one child wrote, 'Wone day I am going to Spain. On a playn. Wen I am a sleep'. Although there are errors, spelling is phonetically plausible and does not detract from the sense of what has been written.
- The early years classrooms and outside areas provide a safe and enabling environment for young children. For example, the inspection took place during a heatwave, but Reception children were able to play safely outside as a large, mature tree provides excellent shade. The classrooms are well maintained, making the early years provision bright, attractive and welcoming.
- Children generally behave well in the early years classes. They learn the school's rules and usually follow them well. Occasionally some children become a little over-excited and, for example, forget that they should not run inside. Children mostly persevere with their chosen activities and this helps them to develop their understanding of the things they learn about.

School details

Unique reference number	117193
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10053864

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Ray
Headteacher	Helen Cook
Telephone number	0208 428 1166
Website	www.greenfields.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@greenfields.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum standards, set by the government, for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Separately registered childcare provision (EY557957) operates on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 15 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Year 6 pupils were away on a residential visit to an activity centre throughout the inspection. Although inspectors were unable to speak with Year 6 pupils, their exercise books and assessment information were made available to the inspection team.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work. Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with leaders, governors, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took into account 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 45 free-text comments that were received.
- There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tessa Holledge

Her Majesty's Inspector

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