

INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT GADDESSEN CE VA
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Gaddesden
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

School number: 117433

Headteacher: Mrs B Southorn

Reporting inspector: Stuart Russell Rgl
21292

Dates of inspection: 17-19 January 2000

Inspection number: 190683

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Great Gaddesden CE VA Primary School Great Gaddesden Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP1 3BT
Telephone number:	01442 255734
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Wood
Date of previous inspection:	October 8-10 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a CE Voluntary Aided, rural primary school with three to four year old nursery children on its roll. Until a week before the inspection, the Year 2 pupils also shared accommodation with the nursery children, the reception class and the Year 1 pupils.

The school is much smaller than other primary schools. It has the equivalent of 74 full-time pupils compared with an average of 226 nationally. Age groups vary widely in size from seven pupils in Year 5 to 15 in Year 3.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (8.1) is below the national average. The school draws most of its pupils from Great Gaddesden or the neighbourhood.

The percentage of children speaking English as an additional language is low. (1.3 per cent). **Most children are of white ethnic origin.**

The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average. It is the policy of the school to enrol at least one pupil with identified special educational need, every two years.

The school's nursery and infant baseline assessments show a wide range of attainment on entry to the school and to Key Stage 1; including children with special educational needs and able children. Overall, it is slightly above average. Wide variation, however, characterises the intake.

The school has identified the following priorities for the academic year 1999/2000:

- **To improve the attainment of Year 2 pupils;**

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school with many very good features. The governors set very high targets for the 11 year olds and the school consistently achieves them. Each year since 1997, the school's overall results at age 11 in English, mathematics and science, compared to all schools and to schools of a similar type, have been very high. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 in 1999 in English and science was very high in comparison with similar schools and well above average in mathematics. In 1998, one pupil achieved level 6 in mathematics. All the pupils are taught very well and consequently learn very well. They have very good attitudes, values and their personal development is very good. The school is excellently led and managed. The school is very effective because the governors, headteacher and staff aim and succeed in meeting the diverse needs of all pupils. When asked their opinion on why the school is so successful, parents said that the school builds up the confidence of all its pupils whatever their ability. Parents who thought that their children were of average ability, those with children who have special educational needs and parents with able or talented children, agreed. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its previously very good standards and in particular, has improved its accommodation; with good effect on teaching and learning. Despite expenditure per pupil being very high, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school matches work very well to all the pupils' needs and provides very good challenges and resources for all, including the nursery-aged children at the school and pupils with special educational needs.
- In order to address the potential problems of pupils' remaining in one class for more than one year, the curriculum is very well planned to cover several years, avoiding unintentional repetition and retaining freshness, breadth and progression.

- The school is imaginatively staffed with part-time teachers who provide the school with a very good range of expertise. Parents and other friends of the school, contribute very well to the rich curriculum offered to the pupils.
- Some year-groups are very small. Pupils may have few peers of the same age or capability. The school addresses this potential social isolation by fostering inclusiveness. Parents said that everybody 'mucks in'.

What could be improved

- The attainment of Year 2 pupils. The school has already identified this in its school development plan as a priority.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1996, the trend in attainment of the 11 year olds in the National Curriculum tests has been upwards in line with the national trend. This has been achieved despite the school's results already being very good in 1996. The quality of teaching observed during this inspection, was of a higher standard than at the time of the last inspection with 73 per cent judged very good or excellent compared to 28 per cent in 1996. Such high quality teaching was seen throughout the school. There is a similar picture to for the quality of the pupils learning. At the time of the last inspection, progress was judged to be satisfactory on the whole in key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. One of the reasons that the school sees for this improvement, is the improved accommodation for all the pupils and particularly for Year 2 pupils who have had their own classroom since the beginning of term. The leadership of the school has responded excellently to the last inspection. The school has two additional classrooms (one purpose-built for the Year 1 and under-six pupils) and it only awaits the grant from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) before building on an art and technology area begins. The school has developed effective self-evaluation procedures that result in the school's comparing its performance against other schools, challenging itself, consulting the school community about its provision and competing for best value for money. This involves constant review of curricular planning and management. Since the last inspection, the school has matched both national trends and its own targets and has improved its provision very well. It has strong commitment and capacity to carrying-on doing so.

STANDARDS

A table showing the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests, is not used in the report because the relevant year is less than ten pupils.

Standards achieved by 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science, are very high. The school achieves the academic targets that it sets for its pupils. The percentage of 11 year old pupils who reached level 5 in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in English and science was very high in comparison with similar schools and well above average in mathematics. In the lessons seen, the present 11 year olds are reaching similar high standards. Experimental and investigative work in mathematics and science and independent writing, particularly poetry, in English, are very high. Throughout the school there are very high standards in music. One of the concerns of the school for some time has been the relative under-performance of Year 2 pupils despite its being broadly in line with the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above, nationally. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading and writing and was above national averages. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 2A or 2B, however, was below average, depressing the school's results against national results and those of similar schools. The school has identified the distractions to the Year 2 pupils through their being taught with younger pupils the cause for this. In the very short time the Year 2 pupils have had their own classroom, the benefit can be seen in their learning. The present Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are at least in line with national expectations. Children who are under-five in the Reception Class are well on line to achieving the standards above those expected nationally of children of this age. Most are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children are very keen to come to school and take part in the wide range of activities that it provides. The school encourages initiative and willingness to take responsibility.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There is a very strong community spirit in the school that includes all its pupils in its activities. It lays emphasis upon respecting other people's differences and consequently it appears to be free of bullying, sexism or racism. Behaviour in lessons and around the school, is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils include and support one another because the inclusive philosophy of the school encourages this. All its pupils develop confidence that in the opinion of their parents, stands them in good stead at secondary school.
Attendance	Well above the national average in the academic year 1998/99. Unauthorised absence was well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of the teaching observed, ranged from good to excellent with the majority very good; 27 per cent was good and 73 per cent very good and at times, excellent. Similarly very good teaching was seen throughout the school. The pupils make progress and the quality of their learning is very good. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well with the Literacy and Numeracy Hours, very well established. Teachers plan work that appropriately challenges all pupils; such as the school's able pupils and those with special educational needs. This is the outstanding strength of the teaching and results in all pupils making very good progress relative to their aptitude. At their meeting with the registered inspector, parents emphasised that the school helps all pupils learn, irrespective of their ability. At the time of the last inspection, the presentation of the pupils' work and the standard of their handwriting were criticised. The school took steps to address this by introducing a handwriting scheme. Handwriting is now taught systematically and the benefit of this is to be seen in the pupils' well-presented work. This is particularly the case with the younger pupils who have enjoyed the benefit of this systematic approach to handwriting from an early age.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and caters very well for the wide range of its pupils through the variety it offers; for instance, extra-curricular opportunities such as the chess and gardening clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a feature of the school. Their individual needs are very well met and they confidently take a full part in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with	The school is careful to ensure that pupils with English as an additional

English as an additional language	language can take full advantage of the opportunities that it offers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The curriculum, its Church connections and its extensive range of extra curricular activities, cultivates the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community. It takes steps to ensure the welfare of its pupils, their health and safety. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. These are made clear in the school prospectus.

The high quality of curricular provision is characterised by the breadth of opportunities that it offers the pupils. It also promotes initiative and self confidence. This is reflected in the way the school cares for its pupils. The pupils care for one another as part of a community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is excellently led and managed. The character of the school enables all its pupils to do their best. Sharp improvement targets are set by the headteacher and staff for each of their pupils. Success in achieving these is carefully monitored. This promotes very high standards and very effective teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities fully. Fully informed of its work, they collaborate most effectively with the headteacher and staff in achieving the school's aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school very effectively monitors and evaluates its performance, diagnoses its strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action to secure improvement. This is seen in the course of action taken to raise the standards of the seven year olds.
The strategic use of resources	These self-evaluation procedures result in the school's comparing its performance against other schools, challenging itself, consulting the school community about its provision and competing for best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In their returns to the parental questionnaire, most parents strongly agreed that their children like school; That they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem; That the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best; That the school is well led and managed; and That the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although in their response to the parents' questionnaire, most parents agreed that their children get the right amount of work to do at home, at their meeting with the registered inspector, many of the parents present considered that the amount of homework that their children were doing, was too time consuming and restricted the children's opportunities to take part in other activities.

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views. The school's homework policy is consistent with government guidelines. It is judged to be appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

1 The school matches work very well to all the pupils' needs and provides very good challenges and resources for all, including the nursery-aged children at the school and pupils with special educational needs.

2. Equal opportunities are not an optional extra at this school but an integral aspect of all of the work of the school; including lesson planning. The school creates a climate in which individuality is valued.

3. Although few in number, provision for nursery-aged pupils is very good. The curriculum is appropriately planned in terms of the six areas of learning for the under-fives. They are taught by an appropriately qualified nursery nurse. Accommodation is purposely designed and the books and resources provided for them are very good quality nursery equipment. Parents spoke highly of the school's procedures for initiating children into school and used the phrase that they 'grew into school'; the process was so smooth.

4. Pupils with special educational needs are welcomed into the school. There is very good collaboration between pupil, parents, the special educational needs co-ordinator and members of staff so that the practical, clearly identified targets in the pupils individual education plans are implemented by teachers and support staff. Consequently there is the right blend of help and challenge with the pupils becoming very independent.

5. The school has few pupils with English as an additional language. However, the school has identified that the child has fluent English, is making very good progress academically and is included socially.

6. The school includes able, gifted and talented pupils. The school's very thorough assessment procedures that plot progress carefully, identify these pupils. All the staff both teaching and support staff are aware of them and devise work that challenges them. For instance, some work with older pupils and others use extension materials. Parents of able pupils spoke highly to the registered inspector, of the school's provision for them. A strength of the teaching is its emphasis upon investigation. This enables this group of pupils to excel at an appropriate level. The wide range of extra-curricular activities gives them the opportunities to pursue their talents. This was the case when an advanced recorder group was playing Blues on differently pitched recorders.

7. At their meeting with the registered inspector, parents of average pupils were at pains to emphasise that they felt that their children's needs were very well met. They felt that they were not passed over because they did not stand-out. Provision for them was equally very good.

8. To address pupils' remaining in one class for more than one year, the curriculum is very well planned to cover several years, avoiding unintentional repetition and retaining freshness, breadth and progression.

9. The content of the subjects of the National Curriculum is delivered on a two-yearly cycle. This ensures coverage without unintentional repetition. Aspects of the school's work such as the Numeracy and Literacy Hours are very successfully achieved by grouping pupils in mixed-age classes so that they are engaged in appropriate tasks.

10. The school is imaginatively staffed with part-time teachers who provide the school with a very good range of expertise. Parents and other friends of the school, contribute very well to the rich curriculum offered to the pupils

11. Although there are only 69 full-time pupils in the school, there are eight teachers employed at the school at various times during the week. This has been achieved through careful deployment of part-time staff. Together they bring a very good range of expertise to the school enabling the

headteacher to allocate leadership for subjects of the curriculum and special educational needs fairly. Parents' contributions to the life of the school and that of other friends of the school, further enrich its life. Examples of this are the chess club and football coaching on Saturday mornings. Pupils sometimes travel to chess tournaments on Sunday afternoons.

12. Some year-groups are very small. Pupils may have few peers of the same age or capability. The school addresses potential social isolation by fostering inclusiveness. Parents said that everybody 'mucks in'.

13. The school is very well aware of its smallness and uses this characteristic positively. Individuality and initiative are encouraged. The pupils play a major part in the life of the school and its events so that there is a strong sense of community. Pupils collaborate and play easily together. This is obvious in the playground and in clubs such as the netball club where boys are as at home as the girls. Consequently the children find that they are able to mix easily across groups and find like-minded friends. The teaching in assembly gives a positive message on the value of individuality and valuing uniqueness. This contributes strongly to a school ethos where children grow in confidence.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

14. The attainment of Year 2 pupils. The school has already identified this in its school development plan as a priority.

15. One of the concerns of the school for some time has been the relative under-performance of Year 2 pupils despite its being broadly in line with the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above, nationally.

16. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading and writing was above national averages. However the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2A or 2B was below average, depressing the school's results against national results and those of similar schools.

17. The school has identified the distractions to the Year 2 pupils through their being taught with younger pupils the cause for this. During the past three years the school has attempted to teach the Year 2 pupils apart from the younger pupils for part of the day, by using for instance, the school library. The school concluded that this was still unsatisfactory and at the beginning of this term acquired a classroom for the Year 2 pupils.

18. In the very short time the Year 2 pupils have had their own classroom, the benefit can be seen in their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) Monitor the success of the steps that have been taken to improve the attainment of the Year 2 pupils. (Paragraphs 14 –19)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

15

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

4

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13.33	60.00	26.60				

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	5	69
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	24

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	99	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	13	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (79)	80 (82)	87(82)
	National	82 (80)	83(81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (82)	80 (82)	87 (91)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	99	3	4	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	7	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100(100)
	National	70(65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	6	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (100)	86 (100)	86 (100)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.4
Average class size	16.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52hrs 55mins

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22hr 5 mins

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	180958
Total expenditure	177063
Expenditure per pupil	2426
Balance brought forward from previous year	14823
Balance carried forward to next year	18718

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	79
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	6		
My child is making good progress in school.	47	50			3
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	53			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	64	15		
The teaching is good.	62	35			3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	44	18		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	24	21		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32			3
The school works closely with parents.	44	32	12	12	
The school is well led and managed.	68	26		6	
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	35	9		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	56	3		