



Green Lea First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 124105
LEA Staffordshire

Inspection number 274797
Inspection dates 17 May 2005
Reporting inspector Mr M S Burghart

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	First	School address	Mill Lane
School category	Community		Milwich
Age range of pupils	4 - 9		Stafford ST18 0EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	(01889) 505 309
Number on roll	37	Fax number	(01889) 505 309
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Bragg
Date of previous inspection	April 1999	Headteacher	Mrs S Chambers

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 - 9	June 2005	274797

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Green Lea First School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural first school in Milwich near Stafford serving seven small villages. There are 37 pupils in two classes. The head teaches for three days of the week. Nearly a quarter of pupils have special educational needs. This is above average. There are no children in the care of the local education authority and the proportion of children eligible for free school meals is very small. There are no pupils from minority ethnic heritages or with English as an additional language. Children start school with average levels of experience and ability. The school received an Achievement Award in 2002.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school, very popular with parents and pupils, where pupils make very good progress, academically and personally, by the time they leave. These judgements confirm the school's own views. Standards are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and well above expectations at the end of Year 4 because of very good quality teaching and a well planned curriculum. The school takes outstanding care of pupils, and because of the staff its ethos is excellent. All pupils are fully included in all activities and work is well matched to their abilities. These are two reasons why progress is very good. Provision for children in Reception and those pre-school children who attend part-time is good. This leads to good standards. Links with outside agencies and the community are good.

The school has made sound progress since its inspection in 1999 and good improvement recently since the head returned from long-term absence and her teaching commitment was reduced to allow her more time for management. Currently, leadership and management of the school are good. This judgement reflects positive features in the contributions of head and staff to leadership and management, but recognises that although governors are very supportive, they need to be more rigorous in holding the school to account. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. As a very small school its costs are very high, but nevertheless Green Lea gives satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

In order for the school to be even better:

- Governors should be more rigorous in their monitoring of the school's strengths and weaknesses and in developing ways to evaluate the impact of initiatives on improving performance.

Achievement and standards

Children start school with average levels of experience and ability. This represents a wide range which, coupled with the very small size of each year group, makes judgements about progress difficult. Pupils currently in Year 2 have made good improvement since they joined the school. Teachers' assessments, confirmed by this inspection, show that all pupils reach at least the levels expected nationally for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant proportion reach beyond this. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson on the properties of three-dimensional shapes,

some seven-year-olds showed skills and understanding usually associated with older pupils because they were challenged very well.

As a consequence of very good teaching and learning, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress by the end of Year 4 and most reach standards in English and mathematics normally expected of 11-year olds. This represents very good achievement for both boys and girls, and shows how effectively work is planned and taught to suit different abilities. Pupils are very well prepared for the middle school. Staff know pupils very well. This knowledge helps teachers to set challenging, but realistic, targets for pupils to achieve. This has been the case for several years, with a trend of improvement above the national profile, and is a credit to the school.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

This is an outstanding strength of the school. Pupils respond extremely well to the school's excellent ethos with excellent behaviour and attitudes. Even the youngest children and those with special educational needs sustain attention and interest for considerable periods with very positive effects on learning. There is plenty of evidence, much of which comes from talking to pupils and parents, to demonstrate that pupils very much enjoy school.

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good whilst their moral awareness and social interaction are excellent. This is very much a consequence of the very small nature of the school and the high quality of relationships throughout. Pupils show excellent consideration for each other and the environment, a very good example of which was the school's success in achieving a local award for being eco-friendly.

The school is very successful in encouraging pupils to consider their own safety and that of others, and is effectively teaching consideration of healthy lifestyles. School meals present menus based on a healthy diet and physical activities are promoted well in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils respond extremely well and display just as much enthusiasm when given opportunities to take initiative and show responsibility. For example, pupils of all ages make very positive contributions through the school council, raising money for charity, and joining in village events. In mathematics, children are successfully introduced to the basic skills which will support their future economic well-being.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching is usually very good and has several outstanding features. Strengths of teaching include:

- Very well presented work to suit the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the same class, and ensure that they are well challenged.
- Well planned work and very clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils.
- Excellent relationships.
- A strong contribution to teaching and learning by teaching assistants, especially for children in Reception and those with special educational needs.
- Very good questioning that is successful in getting pupils to think about their own opinions and conclusions before answering.
- The good guidance that staff give pupils about how they can improve.

Teachers are good at assessing what children can already do when they join the school to gauge progress accurately. They carefully identify pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they receive appropriate work. Whilst a good range of tests and assessments is completed to show what pupils know, understand and can do, there is still more scope to analyse results and trends to set targets and plan future work.

Successful teaching in both classes, but especially for Years 2 to 4, has an outstanding impact on pupils' learning and underpins the very good progress from Reception to the end of Year 4.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The school provides a good, broad and relevant curriculum which meets all pupils' needs and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Recently improved planning to make learning more interesting and enjoyable is effective and pupils are responding very positively, as well as making very good progress.

Learning is enhanced by a good variety and number of extra-curricular activities which include visits, for example, Reception and Year 1 joining pupils from other schools on a Bluebell walk, and after-school activities such as the football club run by apprentices from Stoke City FC.

Pupils are very successfully encouraged to be fit and healthy and there is appropriate attention paid to the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol.

Consideration of security and personal safety is outstanding and entirely consistent with the school's commitment to caring for everyone in the school community. The school knows that the lack of a safe and well resourced outside space for Reception children adjacent to their classroom is a disadvantage for their learning through outdoor play.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Parents are quite correct in believing that the school takes excellent care of their children. This is fundamental to this school's intentions to be fully inclusive and provide support and guidance for all pupils. Pupils are well known to all adults and this serves to show pupils how much they matter. Pupils are rightfully confident that they will be listened to and that their contributions will be valued.

Child protection procedures are in place and ensure that all staff are aware of what to do to keep children safe. The last inspection found weaknesses in aspects of risk assessment relating to school visits. These have been remedied, but the action taken is not documented carefully enough; for example, in governors' records, to enable systematic evaluation.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good overall. This judgement represents a mix of strengths and some areas for further development.

Leadership of the curriculum and other areas of the school's work, by head and staff, is good and leads to the high standards of work already reported. The school is well managed on a day-to-day level. Systems and routines are securely in place and these ensured stability even during the head's absence. Resources are well managed and pupils fully included in all activities. The educational direction and vision of the school have been improved since the head's teaching load was reduced earlier this year, but her absence meant that some planned developments were put on hold.

Governors, many of whom are parents, are very supportive of the school, but do not check rigorously enough the impact of decisions and initiatives. This has restricted their influence on school development. Recent moves to raise

governors' awareness of curriculum issues and to link these more effectively to the use of finance are having positive effects. Overall, the governance of the school is satisfactory, but there is a tendency to depend too much on the staff for evaluating the effects of initiatives on the quality of learning. This, coupled with the stalling effect of the head's absence, means that the school's capacity to improve is currently satisfactory rather than good. Staff are effective in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress and provision, but carry a large load in this very small school. Governors could do more to reduce this.

Positive features of governors' work include:

- Making effective decisions about staffing. The increased classroom assistance and additional office hours are now successfully supporting the head in managing the school.
- Improving accommodation and outdoor facilities to enhance the learning environment.

Grade: 2

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	N/A
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	N/A
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	N/A
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	N/A
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Y	N/A
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Y	N/A

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	1	N/A
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	1	N/A
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	N/A
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	N/A
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	N/A
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	N/A
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	1	N/A

Annex A

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	N/A
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Y	N/A

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Y
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Y
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Y
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Y
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Y
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Y
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Y
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Y
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Y
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Y
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Y
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Y
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Y
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	N/A

Annex B

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800
F 0207 421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Green Lea First School
Mill Lane
Milwich
Stafford
ST18 0EA

18th May 2005

Dear Children,

It was a treat to meet you and to spend time at your school. I was impressed by the way you welcomed me and especially by the Year 4 boys and girls who showed me around the grounds.

The inspection found that there are lots of things to be pleased with at your school. From talking to you I know that you all like Green Lea and really enjoy being there. You are lucky to be part of a good school.

These are some of its strengths:

- The school takes excellent care of all of you and makes sure you are all treated fairly.
- Teachers do their job very well. This helps you to do your best.
- When you leave you will be very well prepared for the middle school because Green Lea's standards are high.
- The school is extremely good at helping you to learn how to be caring, sensible people.

Most things about the school are good, but here are two improvements that could make it even better:

- Governors are keen to help look after the school. They need to think of more ways to find out about what is good and what still needs to be improved.
- Everyone knows that Reception children deserve a nicer and safer outside play space near their classroom.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart
Lead inspector