



# Great Waltham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115114  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279514  
**Inspection dates** 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	South Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		CM3 1DF
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01245360395
<b>Number on roll</b>	131	<b>Fax number</b>	01245362890
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. David Moncastor
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Diane Wilson

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 8 March 2006 - 9 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279514
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average school. It serves the areas of Great Waltham and Pleshey and increasingly admits children from further afield. As a result, the roll is rising and the numbers joining some year groups are quite high. The majority of pupils come from White British families and an average proportion has learning difficulties or disabilities. Children join the Foundation Stage with broadly average attainment.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school considers its overall effectiveness is good and the inspection endorses this view. Parents and pupils value the school highly. The headteacher provides effective and energetic leadership and is very well respected. She leads a close staff team and, with very good support from governors, ensures that the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. The school takes effective action that ensures standards are steadily rising. It gives good value for money. Pupils in all age groups, including the Foundation Stage, achieve well. This is because the teaching is mostly good, although the absence of the Class 4 teacher has led to some disruptions to learning. The school is tackling this situation urgently. The standards reached by the Year 6 pupils have mainly been above average in recent years. English standards have been particularly good and the school is now successfully working to ensure that standards in mathematics also rise further. It is rightly trying to find out why girls do not do quite as well as boys in tests. The school provides a good curriculum. This includes very good provision for pupils' personal development which reflects the school's Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy school and behave very well. Leadership and management are good. The school has moved forward well since the last inspection in 1999. It is forging strong links with nearby schools and with other outside agencies to help its growth, development and efficiency. With its current team of staff and governors, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teaching and learning in Class 4 are as good as in the rest of the school.
- Continue the initiative to raise standards in mathematics further and ensure that both girls and boys achieve equally well.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From an average starting point, pupils achieve well. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen to be above the national average for the past two years. The proportion reaching Level 3 in writing in this age group has doubled since 2003. The school's overall performance in the Year 6 tests has been consistently good since 2002 and significantly higher than the national average for three of the past four years. In 2005, test results for Year 6 pupils showed they had made much better progress since Year 2 than the national average. A high proportion reached Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils and these have been exceeded in recent tests. In general, pupils achieve well whatever their background or capabilities. However, over time, the boys have done better than the girls and the school is trying to identify why. At present, the progress of pupils in Class 4 is too patchy because they have had several different teachers in the past few months.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect of the school is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school and have positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well. This was shown on the two wet days of the inspection, when they occupied themselves sensibly and profitably during indoor playtimes. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. These aspects have a high priority in the school, are rooted firmly in the Christian ethos, and benefit from links with the church locally. All staff present a consistently good model of behaviour and promote very good relationships. The oldest pupils set an outstanding example. They are sensible and thoughtful young people who care about each other and are proud of their school. Pupils' good academic achievements equip them well for the next stages of their education and lay the foundations for later life. Pupils also show extremely good attention to their health. The school has Advanced Healthy Schools status and provides very well for pupils' physical and social education and diet. Pupils are taught effectively about maintaining their personal safety both in and out of school. They contribute their views well through opportunities such as the class and school forums. They support each other by initiatives such as 'Playground Friends'. At a school forum meeting they showed great awareness of their environmental responsibilities in plans to encourage energy conservation and recycling. They demonstrate a commitment to the wider community through a wide range of village links and projects such as the one to provide resources for a linked school in Romania. Attendance levels are average and punctuality is good. Parents and pupils responded well to the school's efforts to reverse a dip in attendance two years ago and rates continue to rise.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

With the exception of the current difficulties in Class 4, teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons that pupils say are 'fun and help us to learn'. They cater well for the wide range of age and ability in each class. Teachers promote very good relationships and manage behaviour well. The school makes effective use of its teaching assistants, especially to support pupils with learning difficulties and to teach information and communication technology (ICT). Good use is also made of visiting tutors and coaches to lead lessons in subjects such as music, sports and French. Pupils enjoy the variety that these activities provide and benefit from the lessons. The arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' individual progress are good and their use is promoting higher standards. Teachers regularly mark work and set individual targets for further improvement. These systems are mostly used well and pupils like them. Pupils would benefit from an even more consistent approach to how each individual's targets are reviewed and reset.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The school teaches all the required subjects and areas of learning. The ways teachers plan work for the mixed age classes has improved well since the last inspection. There have also been good improvements to the curriculum and resources for the Foundation Stage, including considerable enhancement of the outdoor area. The moves to make more effective links between subjects and to increase creativity in the curriculum are proving successful and pupils are happy with the changes, commenting that lessons are more varied and interesting. The school acts on its analyses of what needs improving further. Current successful initiatives include those to improve problem-solving in mathematics and standards in reading. The needs of minorities are considered well in planning, including gifted or talented pupils, and lower attaining pupils with special learning or language needs. For its size, the school provides a good range of clubs and special events. It places a high priority on music and offers a wide range of instrumental tuition, a choir and an orchestra.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. The day-to-day pastoral care of pupils is extremely good and, combined with the mostly effective academic guidance, provides good quality support for pupils. This promotes pupils' overall progress well. Parents are very satisfied with the care given to their children. There are very thorough systems to ensure pupils' safety and security, including attention to child protection procedures and the vetting of adults who work in school. The contribution made by the home-school liaison worker is outstanding. Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support she gives to the families she meets. This partnership makes a very effective contribution to the overall development of the children concerned. There are also good arrangements to support pupils with learning difficulties and the new co-ordinator for this area has appropriate plans for further improvements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has improved well since its last inspection. Standards have risen well and continue to rise because the school is led and managed well. The headteacher sets a very good lead, is clear-sighted in her vision for the future and works effectively with the acting deputy head. The governors support the school's development very well and fulfil their duties as 'critical friends' effectively. The management of the finances and accommodation is very efficient. One of the main reasons that standards are rising is that the headteacher has given staff the training and confidence to manage their areas of responsibility well. This has happened, for instance, through the Primary Leadership Programme and the high quality training available to the school's business manager, who gives excellent administrative support. The school promotes equal

opportunities well for its pupils. Its capacity to improve further is good, based on the commitment, expertise and track record of the current staff and governors. The headteacher continues to have high expectations of staff and pupils and encourages and enthuses them. The school checks the quality of teaching and the curriculum well. It evaluates its performance accurately and knows how to maintain its strengths and remedy its weaknesses. Important partners such as the parents, pupils and other nearby schools are involved extremely well in its development and their views and ideas are valued. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. This is reflected in its rising roll and the important place the school maintains at the heart of the local community.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school and helping me to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about what I saw on my visit. Here are some of the best things: - You enjoy school a great deal and your behaviour is very good; this means that you learn well and make lots of friends. - I enjoyed seeing your School Forum at work and was especially impressed with the ways you want to encourage recycling and energy saving in school. - You are trying to be as fit and healthy as possible and the school is helping you to do this. Your 'Fruit Shop' has closed because so many of you bring healthy snacks from home that it is no longer needed! - You have good teachers who make your lessons interesting and fun. - As well as your lessons, your school gives you plenty of clubs and other activities, like the Book Week that I shared with you. - Mrs Wilson works very well with your teachers and the governors to make sure that your school keeps on improving. - Your parents are right to be very pleased with your school. There are a few things that could be a bit better. You are good readers and writers and the school is right to be trying to make you better mathematicians. I hope you will all work hard in numeracy lessons, especially the girls, because girls have not always done as well as the boys in the past. Those of you in Class 4 have had several different teachers recently. Everyone wants to make this situation better and Mrs Wilson is urgently trying to sort it out. I hope you keep enjoying your time at Great Waltham School.