



Great Dunmow Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115298
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279569
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jacqueline Marshall LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Walnut Walk
School category	Foundation		CM6 1ZR
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01371 873184
Number on roll	349	Fax number	01371 876932
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Martin Lee
Date of previous inspection	13 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Catherine Kiff

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Great Dunmow is an average-sized primary school. The school has recently become a primary school and moved site. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school after the Reception year has been high during this unsettling period. Lower than average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's view that its effectiveness is satisfactory with strengths is confirmed by the inspection. This is a caring school where pupils are well looked after and enjoy good relationships with each other and adults. They enjoy school and behave well. The school has an extremely strong partnership with parents, who value highly the work of the school and in particular the effective headteacher. This very strong sense of teamwork between pupils, staff and parents is a key factor in the school's good capacity to improve. Children in Reception receive a really good start because teaching is good. This ensures that they achieve well and reach standards above the level expected for their age. Whilst achievement, teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, variations in the quality of provision affect pupils' progress. A key factor has been the school's recent changes in status and building. As a result it has yet to fully embed the curriculum, particularly for the oldest pupils, improve teaching in its growing staff to be consistently good or better and fully use the recently introduced systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Strengths in teaching and support staff have ensured standards are average and rising. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has steered the school extremely well through the recent changes and is giving a good lead in helping key staff to build skills in checking how well things are going. This is important because, given the growing nature of the school, many procedures are developing and there is a need to ensure that practice is consistent throughout the school. Governors give the school good support. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment to set clearer individual targets and check that all pupils are doing their best. - Continue to develop the expertise of the school's leaders in checking and supporting the work of the school. - Raise standards by improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school to the level of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the well-planned and targeted support they receive. Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start in school because teachers know the children well and provide exciting opportunities for them to learn new skills. Last year, from a below average starting point, children made good progress and started in Year 1 with expected levels for their age. Children in the current Reception classes are making good progress from a starting point in line with other children their age. Standards reached by pupils in the tests at the end of Year 2 were in line with the national average in 2005. As a result of the school's

move these dipped slightly from 2004, with few pupils reaching the higher levels. This dip has now been halted and results are on track to rise with the current Year 2 pupils. 2005 was the first year that Year 6 pupils had taken the national tests in the school. A very small number of pupils, having just joined the school, achieved in line with their expectations. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet the school's targets and achieve above average standards in national tests. These targets are challenging because of the disruption in their education these pupils have experienced. Progress for many of them, particularly in the last year, has been at least good because of the high quality of teaching they have received since joining the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, a view strongly supported by the vast majority of parents. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They make a very strong contribution to school life through class and school councils, enabling them to raise questions and ideas important to them. Pupils respond well to their responsibilities and their ideas have a real impact on school life, ranging from the safety of the new adventure playground to the choice of sausage to be served at lunchtimes. Pupils behave safely and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, with many involved in a wide range of after-school activities, including sports. They develop a good economic understanding through the school council and their involvement in fundraising for local and national charities. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong and is a key factor in their good behaviour and positive relationships. Pupils' cultural development is improving because the school makes good use of visitors and visiting groups to raise their awareness of the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some strong features. This reflects the overall satisfactory progress pupils make through the school. However, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good or better and whilst evidence from the inspection indicates that teaching is improving this has not yet had time to raise pupils' achievement overall. Work throughout the school is generally well matched to individual needs, so pupils are fully included in lessons. The school has worked hard to ensure that more able pupils do well, for example through setting in mathematics and English in Years 3 to 6. However, in some lessons these pupils are not always challenged enough. Occasionally the pace of lessons is too slow or teachers do not ensure that all pupils are listening before they start speaking. As a result pupils are not learning as well as they could. Where teaching is good or outstanding, pupils are inspired because teachers have planned exciting activities which are exceptionally motivating, such as the excellent practice seen involving the three pigs' houses in Reception or

the design and technology project in a Year 3 class. Teachers use assessment increasingly effectively to build on what pupils have already learned and regular marking and discussions with pupils enable them to improve their work. Interactive white boards and computers are used to make lessons interesting and support pupils' learning. For example, the internet was used extremely effectively as part of a Year 6 reading session where pupils achieved very well. Teaching assistants are used well to meet the varied needs of pupils. Very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make good progress towards their individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with strengths. The curriculum in Reception is good because children have an exciting range of hands-on activities to stimulate their learning. However, there has not yet been sufficient time for all aspects of the curriculum to be fully embedded, particularly for the oldest pupils who have been part of the school for less than two years. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of activities outside the school day and visits to local places of interest. Increasingly, the interweaving of subjects makes learning meaningful and enjoyable. The school is very well equipped with computers that are used throughout to support and enhance the pupils' learning. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education provides clear information about how to keep healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school which welcomes all children, whatever their needs. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in pupils' positive attitudes to school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well understood and any pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported very well. Pupils say that they feel safe and know whom to turn to if necessary. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is very good and outside agencies and parents are involved effectively. The school has developed thorough procedures which are now enabling it to track pupils' progress more carefully through each year. Whilst targets are shared with pupils and parents, sometimes their language makes them less pupil friendly, an area the school is working to remedy. However, pupils are increasingly aware of what they need to do next to improve. There is good support for children when they start in Reception and the school is working hard to build strong links with the local secondary school to ease pupils' transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with strong features. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school which is shared with staff, pupils and parents. During a period of considerable turbulence the headteacher has shown excellent skills

in steering the school through its recent change in status and move to a new building. The work of other leaders is satisfactory overall. The relatively new leadership team is developing its role and increasingly taking on responsibility for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it needs to do next. Members of the team are increasingly supporting the headteacher in monitoring teaching to see where it is best and just how well the pupils are doing. The school knows itself well and has robust systems and procedures in place to enable it to have a good capacity to improve. Inspectors agree with the school's own judgement of its overall effectiveness. The governing body is also contributing effectively to this success. Governors are caring, supportive and active in school. They are fully involved in major decisions and fulfil their responsibilities well, helping to overcome a significant budget deficit in recent years. The school regularly seeks and takes into account the views of parents and other stakeholders, resulting in the vast majority of parents responding extremely positively when asked about the effectiveness of their school and in particular the leadership of the headteacher.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you really like your new school and that the grown-ups are kind and look after you well. We think that they help you to know just what you have to do to keep safe and healthy. We were happy to hear that there are plenty of things for you to take part in, such as the class and school councils and sports clubs. We think you are polite to adults and behave well. In order to make your learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to: - keep checking exactly what the school does best and what could be better - make sure you are all given lots of opportunities that stretch you to do your very best. Thank you again for helping us with our work.