



Greensted Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114863
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290062
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Nichola Perry

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Kirby Road
School category	Community		Basildon
Age range of pupils	3–7		Essex SS14 1RX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 552535
Number on roll (school)	170	Fax number	01268 559488
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Steve Hunt
		Headteacher	Mrs P Hardy
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006	Inspection number 290062
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Many pupils enter the Nursery with very weak personal, social, language and communication skills. Higher than average proportions of pupils have learning difficulties and are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. An acting headteacher is covering the secondment of the substantive headteacher until Summer 2008. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed, from within the school, from January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some very good features. It provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. It provides a pleasant and stimulating environment where pupils feel safe, are happy and clearly enjoy their learning. Pupils in all groups make good progress and achieve well.

Good provision in the nursery and reception classes enables pupils to make good progress, from a very low starting point, in developing essential skills in speaking and listening. They also learn how to share, take turns and become part of a group. In spite of this, the school's detailed records show that standards remain below expected levels by the time pupils enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress during Years 1 and 2 so that all achieve well by the time they leave the school. It is a tribute to the staff that test results over the past few years, although variable, have been broadly average. Standards in other subjects are broadly average.

Pupils learn and achieve well because teaching and the curriculum are good. Pupils' progress is regularly and rigorously assessed and tracked, enabling teachers to plan carefully to match their needs. The school provides well for all groups of pupils. Learning needs are identified quickly and support staff are very effective. However, many older pupils still need to reinforce their learning of basic skills in literacy and numeracy more extensively across the curriculum so that gaps in their early learning are better met. They would also benefit from more opportunities to learn through play and structured activities. The needs of the whole child are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils know how to lead a healthy life and are very aware of how to stay safe because of guidance given by staff. There is good provision for pupils to develop skills of benefit in their future lives, for example, they learn how to assess their own progress, and gardening skills in club activities, as well as learning about events in the wider world. They happily take part in community activities and are beginning to express their views through the school council.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and their attitudes to learning are mostly positive, because lessons motivate them well. All pupils are encouraged to develop independence and think for themselves, which helps them to achieve well. Good progress has been made on improving attendance, which is now satisfactory. Care for pupils is outstanding. They receive good academic guidance through the new approach to writing targets with layers of difficulty. This is helping pupils of all ages to focus on what they are learning and how to improve.

The leadership of the school provides clear direction. Management systems are good. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and ensures that the school is able to support all pupils well. Subject leaders show good leadership skills and strong commitment to further improve what they offer pupils. The views of governors, parents and pupils are sought and taken on board. Governors are very supportive, know the school well and fulfil their role satisfactorily.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen learning among older pupils by providing them with more opportunities to learn through independent play and structured activities.
- Raise further the standards in basic literacy and numeracy by providing planned opportunities for pupils to practise these skills across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in the nursery and reception classes but, because their attainment when they start is very low, they do not reach the standards expected when they enter Year 1. Differences in the performance of girls and boys are identified, analysed and support provided so that achievement across the school for all groups of pupils is good. Results in national tests and assessments over the past few years have varied, due to differences in groups of pupils. However, standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The greatest improvement has been in writing over the last four years, although this remains a priority for further improvement. The school has worked hard to raise standards and they significantly improved in 2005, due to a particularly able group of pupils and specific support programmes. In 2006, in spite of a significant dip in reading, overall standards remain broadly average because of improvement in writing and mathematics. Standards in other subjects have been maintained since the last inspection, except in history and geography, where they are now broadly average and no longer a concern.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, safe and enjoy school and learning. Starting in the nursery pupils progress well in developing the skills and attitudes they need to learn. Their thoughts and ideas are valued and, as a result, they are keen to contribute. Behaviour, in and out of lessons, is good and pupils say that their new 'Friendship Monitors' do a very good job. Pupils are much involved within the local community and regularly raise funds for charities. Strong and effective emphasis is placed on developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils show good knowledge of the purpose of Poppy Day and they were also able to talk about their beautiful Aboriginal art work. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating. They are provided with healthy fruit snacks and well balanced meals at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teaching is confident and knowledgeable so that pupils are well motivated to learn and have positive attitudes in lessons. The introduction of 'layered' targets for learning ensures that teachers' planning is well matched to pupils' needs enabling them to understand better what they are learning and how to improve. Good attention is given to developing their confidence and independence and their contributions are valued highly. From the nursery class upwards they love assessing how well they are doing, which is helping them to achieve and progress well. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are being used effectively to ensure that pupils are learning well. Pupils needing extra help are identified early and supported through additional sessions. Support staff help pupils to learn and make good progress. All adults manage the behaviour of pupils very well so that the learning environment is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum across the school is good. In addition to lessons, a range of additional opportunities enhance learning and ensure the needs of the whole child are met. Pupils make good progress in developing skills useful in their future lives through working in teams and many opportunities to take responsibility, such as the school council. They have good understanding of safety issues and learn to lead healthy life styles, supported by a wide range of well attended clubs. Teachers work hard to ensure the curriculum is enjoyable and interesting. Special themed weeks are organised, for example, the recent mathematics week, during which parents could join in their children's learning. Emphasis is strong on developing speaking and listening skills, although there is a need to ensure greater consistency in the teaching of letter sounds. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects, which restricts their progression in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, not enough opportunities are provided for older pupils to take responsibility and learn through planning their own activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are very well cared for and supported. Robust systems are in place to ensure pupils are safe. All adults show a high level of commitment and provide excellent and consistent role-models for pupils. For example, mid-day supervisors are trained as play leaders so their time is used more constructively. The school makes particularly good use of support from others in the community to enhance learning and ensure pupils' well-being. Strong emphasis is placed on developing self-esteem, effective communication and independence. Starting in the nursery, with such things as

self-registration, pupils are taught how to take responsibility. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils are able to undertake many monitoring jobs, including being playground 'Friendship Monitors', an initiative which has been outstandingly successful. All age groups are taught how to decide if they are achieving well. The introduction of curriculum targets which show layers of difficulty and are shared with parents, let children know what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is building on the established strong team spirit and positive ethos of the school. Senior leaders and subject managers work very well together and show good leadership skills, reflected in their purposeful action plans. Detailed analysis of performance at all levels shows outstanding evaluation of the school's overall performance and all those within the school community are involved in this at some stage. As a result, strategic planning documents are highly evaluative, very well focused and effective in guiding the school towards continued improvement. Governors work very hard and are highly supportive of the school. Whilst their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has greatly improved since the last inspection, there is still work to be done in developing their role in holding the school to account.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Greensted Infant School and Nursery, Kirby Road, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1RX

You will remember we visited your school for two days to see how well you are learning. Thank you for answering our questions, showing us your work and helping us to find our way around the school.

Many things about your school are good. You told us how much you like school and your teachers and that you are well cared for. You clearly enjoy school and we think you are lucky to come to a good school like this. We are disappointed that not all of you come to school as regularly as you should. We were impressed by your behaviour and the way the playground monitors help when somebody stands by the friendship stop because they have no one to play with. Most of you work hard which is why you make good progress. All your teachers work very hard to make your learning interesting, although I must admit that I was very glad that I didn't have to touch the cold pasta or put my fingers into the jam to think of words to describe them! We loved your market garden and can see why lots of you want to belong to the gardening club. We were very impressed with how much you knew at your Remembrance Day assembly about why we wear poppies.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school even better. We would like to see more opportunities for the older pupils to learn in the very active way that pupils learn in the nursery and reception classes. We would also like your teachers to write down all their good ideas on how they can help you get better at reading, writing and mathematics so that you can practise these skills in all your other subjects, such as in history, religious education, design technology and art.

We wish you good luck in the future and hope you continue to learn well and enjoy school.

With best wishes

Nichola Perry

Lead Inspector