

Great Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119311
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291381
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Askew
Headteacher	Mr David Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2002
School address	Beaufort Road Morecambe Lancashire LA4 6UB
Telephone number	01524 416971
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a residential area in the seaside town of Morecambe. The proportion of pupils taking a free school meal is much lower than average. When they enter the Reception class, children's development is around that usually seen in schools nationally. There is a lower proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and no pupils are learning through English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Great Wood is a satisfactory school and provides satisfactory value for money. It has good features and parents have confidence in the school and say that their children are happy. One wrote 'my daughter skips into class every morning.' Managers and staff have developed good partnerships with other schools and agencies that provide additional experiences and expertise to support and broaden pupils' development.

Personal development, including behaviour, is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and play an important part in decision making through their pupil council. This helps them to contribute to the school community and prepares them effectively for life in the wider world.

Achievement is satisfactory. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. From an average starting point children make good progress and exceed the level expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and attainment is higher than average by the end of Year 2. Results from the 2006 national tests for Year 6 were average but lower than usual for the school. In order to improve matters, senior managers introduced procedures to track learning over time, to set expectations of what each pupil should achieve and to intervene when learning goals were not being met. Convincing records, observations made during the inspection and the initial results from the 2007 tests show these changes have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, especially in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the average Level 4 in English and mathematics has improved and meets the school's challenging targets. Although the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 also increased it is not as high as it could be and fell short of the school's expectations especially in mathematics.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and in many lessons seen teaching was good. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve over time although, in a few classes, the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Marking and the advice given to pupils to help them improve is good in English, but in mathematics they do not make it clear to pupils how to improve. The good curriculum has undergone recent development in order to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise the skills they are learning. There is a good range of enrichment, especially for physical education and creative arts. Throughout school, a good emphasis on personal and health education ensures that pupils understand how to stay safe and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Thorough checks are made on the suitability of staff.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and staff have recognised the root causes of the decline in achievement and driven through a range of improvements in teaching and management over the last year to raise standards. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a clear idea of what to do next and has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the challenge in lessons in Key Stage 2 to enable the more able pupils to make more progress.
- Improve marking and the advice given to pupils in mathematics.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of under-performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Progress is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and for pupils who have learning difficulties. Children's prior learning and personal development are around average when they start school. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage so by the end of the Reception year attainment is above the level expected for this age. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and have been so consistently over the last five years. A good number of pupils attain the higher Level 3, especially in reading.

The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above average over recent years but they declined in 2006 and standards were average. The dip can be attributed in part to some issues with behaviour and attitudes in the cohort. However, it was mostly due to the fact that some pupils' underachievement had not been detected or corrected early enough. Improved tracking of progress and higher expectations mean pupils are making up for shortfalls in their previous learning and making better progress. The school's records and initial results from the 2007 tests show that pupils' attainment has improved and is higher than usually seen. However, the proportion progressing to the higher Level 5 does not meet the school's own targets and the higher attaining pupils do not make enough progress. Boys have not been doing as well as girls. The school has put in successful changes to the curriculum to motivate and interest boys and they are rapidly closing the gap on the girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and a strength of the school. Pupils feel safe, enjoy learning and make the most of all that school offers. Attendance is above average and behaviour is good. Relationships are very good; pupils say that bullying is a rarity and any small incidents are sorted out quickly by the teachers.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They willingly take on responsibility and do it well. For example, they play an active part in consultations and making decisions through their school council. They contribute to the school community by acting as playground mediators and house captains. Many links with other schools in England and abroad are helping pupils to appreciate an awareness of the different cultures in society. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a wide range of opportunities to enjoy physical exercise. Pupils are confident in the use of information and communication technology and have a sound basis for their future education and life in the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons, the teaching has a number of good and occasionally outstanding features; in upper Key Stage 2 in particular, the teaching sets exacting challenges and leads to an excellent quality of learning. Throughout the school tasks are set at different levels of difficulty but, in some lower junior classes, the more able pupils are not always challenged fully.

Across all age groups, relationships in lessons are good and pupils trust their teachers. This means that they develop good attitudes to learning and a willingness to persevere with tasks. In some lessons, especially English, good marking and the use of success checklists are helping pupils to evaluate their own work. However, this practice is not as well developed in mathematics. Well informed teaching assistants provide good, sensitive support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. They often take special teaching groups that provide a good boost to progress in literacy and numeracy.

In the Foundation Stage teaching caters well for children's needs and stage of development. Children are encouraged to explore and ask questions so they become independent learners. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good and routines are firmly established and pupils have good challenge in their lessons. The teaching of sounds and letters is especially effective in providing a strong foundation for reading and writing work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Following recent improvements the curriculum is now good and is well enriched through visits and visitors. The strong focus on personal development makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Planning has been revised to suit pupils of different dispositions. It now includes more practical, skill-based activities, which especially appeal to the boys. It also provides better links between subjects so learning is consolidated. For example, many lessons include good opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and computer skills. However, planning does not always provide a strand to challenge the more able pupils. Themed events such as the arts week, are much enjoyed and described by the pupils as 'really, really good'.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage children is rich and exciting because it provides varied opportunities for children to discover things for themselves. The outdoor learning area is very attractive and used well. The interesting after-school activities are very popular with the pupils who have enjoyed success in various competitions, such as gymnastics and football. They also take good advantage of opportunities for creative work, such as the pottery club, and to extend their computer and typing skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good and stronger than the educational guidance pupils receive. The school cares for its pupils well and pupils feel safe and valued and secure that adults will listen to them if they have concerns. There are good arrangements for children starting school and for pupils moving on to secondary school. Those in Year 6 say they have no worries about the transition. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection meet current guidelines fully.

The school has improved the systems to check pupils' academic progress and teachers and leaders can now quickly spot where extra help is needed. As yet, the information is not always used effectively especially in some lower junior classes to see where extra challenge is needed for the more able pupils. Pupils are set individual targets and say they find these useful in providing long term goals for learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Strengths in management lie in the good systems of care provided and strong teamwork. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership and is at the forefront of the drive for improvement.

Improved tracking provides a thorough view of pupils' progress and the performance of each class. The information is used well by senior and subject managers to check that pupils are achieving what is expected and to intervene where targets are not being met. As a result, the school is more able to tackle identified weaknesses and early indications show better progress and attainment this year.

The role of subject leaders is satisfactory. Improved opportunities to monitor and evaluate what is happening are raising standards in English and mathematics. Similar systems are currently being developed for science and other subjects. Subject leaders draw up detailed action plans showing a good understanding of what needs attention. However, these are not clearly listed in order of priority in the school's plan for improvement, which makes the task of monitoring and evaluating the success of improvement more difficult. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. Governors support the school well although they are not playing a full part in checking standards and achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

3 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Wood Primary School, Lancashire, LA4 6UB

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and for helping the inspectors when we came to visit your school. I would like to tell you what we found out.

Great Wood Primary is a satisfactory school. It has a good focus on your personal development and this makes it a very friendly place. Your behaviour is good. We really appreciated your smiles and the way you helped us to find our way around school. It was lovely to see how you get on so well and take such good care of each other. You are a credit to your teachers and families. You enjoy your learning and love the variety of clubs, visits and visitors.

The adults in school work very hard to make sure you are happy and safe. You like your teachers and we think that encourages you to try hard. We saw you doing lots of interesting practical work in lessons and using the computers very confidently. Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. Most of them are very pleased with the school. Some think that the managers and staff do not take enough account of pupils' views. I think it might be a good idea if you told them about the work of your very active school council.

Your progress in lessons is getting better - well done. With continued hard work you can do even better! We know that some of you enjoy extra challenges so we have asked the school to make sure that these are always included in your lessons. When your teachers mark your writing they provide some very good advice showing you how you can do better. We think it would be useful for you to have the same sort of help in mathematics.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us know your views so clearly. Please accept my best wishes for the future and I hope that you all enjoyed your arts week.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector