



Greenfields Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134857
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 294186
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Robert Ellis HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxford Road
School category	Community		Shepway
Age range of pupils	3–11		Maidstone ME15 8DF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01622 758538
Number on roll (school)	293	Fax number	01622 759042
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Allan Chell
		Headteacher	Janet Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Greenfields Community Primary School was opened in April 2005 following the amalgamation of Shepway Junior and Infant schools. The junior school was in special measures when the schools were amalgamated. The school continued to operate on two sites until July 2006 when it was consolidated on its present site. Major building works are planned and include the development of a children's centre. Greenfields is an average-sized primary school and serves a disadvantaged community on the fringes of Maidstone. Most children come from White British backgrounds and a small but increasing proportion come from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. There is high pupil mobility.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Greenfields is a happy and cohesive community where every pupil is valued and well cared for. It provides a satisfactory quality of education and has many good features. Standards, although low, are rising and most pupils make satisfactory progress, regardless of their background or ability. It is an increasingly popular school, but its good senior leadership team recognises that although some aspects of the school's work are very good, there remain areas for further development.

Pupils join the school with standards that are well below average overall. Weaknesses in literacy and communication skills impede the learning of many pupils, and the poor provision of one of the predecessor schools has meant that many older pupils have ground to make up. This has resulted in the attainment of many pupils being below the standards expected for their ages, particularly in the older year groups. Results in national tests for 11-year-olds in 2006 were particularly low. However, standards are rising and, given their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being are good because pupils' spiritual, social, and moral development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory because pupils have good opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures but opportunities to explore and understand their own culture are more limited. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. There are good systems and procedures to support vulnerable children. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is satisfactory and improving.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and improving, which enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress in lessons and achieve their targets. However, senior leaders recognise that it is crucial to continue to develop consistently good or better teaching throughout the school if improvement is to be sustained. The school council provides pupils with an opportunity to take responsibility and have a say in how their school is run.

Parents value the support that the school provides and speak extremely positively about the benefits of the parenting classes that are offered.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and her team are good. They have a clear vision for what they want the school and its pupils to achieve. Those responsible for leading and managing the school rigorously monitor all aspects of the school's work, have an accurate picture of its strengths and have taken appropriate action to address any weaknesses they have identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards by improving teaching so that all is as good as the best
- develop the curriculum to improve provision for cultural development so that pupils have good opportunities to explore and understand their own culture.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment of children on entry to the Foundation Stage is significantly below average, particularly in terms of their communication, ability to use numbers, personal, social and health development and language and literacy development. Children make good progress in the Nursery and satisfactory progress in Reception. As a result, they achieve broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1, although writing and speaking and listening skills are the least well developed. In the 2006 national tests for 11-year-olds, standards were well below average but were an improvement on the previous year.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress and a majority are on track to achieve or exceed their targets. The school has worked hard to secure sustained improvement and as a result, attainment is rising. In lessons, most pupils make satisfactory progress and an increasing proportion make good progress. There are no significant differences in progress between groups of students, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in satisfactory and improving attendance. They have good relationships with adults and other pupils and this contributes to the school's caring ethos and their enjoyment of school. They say that they are happy to come to school because they 'feel safe here because all teachers take good care of you'. Pupils feel able to discuss problems with an adult when necessary and know that problems arising from others' inconsiderate behaviour will be dealt with effectively by staff. Behaviour in and around the school is good because procedures for managing behaviour are clear and applied consistently and staff vary their teaching styles to actively engage the pupils in their learning. The school operates a zero tolerance policy towards inappropriate behaviour and when this was first introduced, the number of exclusions rose significantly. However, it has had the desired effect and the number of exclusions has fallen dramatically.

The good arrangements for promoting pupils' health and safety ensure a safe and well-maintained environment for learning. Pupils understand how and why they should adopt healthy lifestyles. They make healthy food choices and enjoy keeping fit. Spiritual, moral and social development is good and pupils are encouraged and given opportunities to develop an understanding of other cultures. However, opportunities to explore their own culture are less well developed.

Pupils' contribution to their own community is satisfactory and is enhanced by the work of the school council, peer mentors and the buddy system. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory. Pupils develop good teamwork and other skills

relevant to later life but for some there are significant weaknesses in their basic literacy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory and rigorous monitoring and support is resulting in significant improvement. Teaching is particularly effective in the very well managed nursery where imaginative activities are sensitively matched to children's needs. Well-directed teaching assistants support learning very effectively and are skilled in helping these young children to gain confidence, extend their play and communicate with others.

The good relationships between adults and pupils result in a classroom ethos of valuing effort and praising achievement. The whole school has focused on raising standards of pupils' behaviour through high expectations and consistent management. Consequently, most classrooms are well ordered; pupils have positive attitudes and understand what makes 'good learning'. This is all helping to increase the pace of improvement throughout the school.

Assessment is now being more effectively used to identify each pupil's progress. As a result, teaching is now better planned to meet the needs of all pupils and to bridge any historical gaps in learning, but this is not consistent across all classes. In the best lessons, marking of pupils' work and oral feedback informs pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work to identify the progress that they are making.

The few weaker lessons lacked pace and some pupils were not sufficiently challenged because expectations of what they could do in the time available were too low.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and improving steadily. It is broad and balanced, but with a clear emphasis on literacy and mathematics to ensure that recent improvements in pupils' progress continue. A very effective and exciting provision for the youngest children gives them a good start to school life and to their enjoyment of learning. The school is currently improving its curriculum by linking individual subjects to provide more interesting and motivating learning. This is well established in Key Stage 1 and being developed in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is enriched with a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are eager to finish their lunch and hurry off to recorder or drama groups. There is a thriving and much appreciated breakfast club. In addition, the school employs specialist teachers for French, sport and music, which further enriches curriculum provision.

Information and communication technology is currently well resourced but the school is looking forward to the greatly improved facilities which will be offered in the scheduled new building. Classrooms are generally good, stimulating spaces for learning. However, the temporary classrooms are less suitable and impose limits on the learning activities which can take place.

Rapidly improving relationships with parents are typified by the excellent parents' support group. Along with the school's strong links with external agencies, these are important aspects of the curriculum provision, which is increasingly meeting the precise needs of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for learners are good. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are robust, effective and regularly reviewed. The staff are passionate about promoting the personal development and well-being of their pupils. As a consequence, the school has now become a calmer place where pupils feel valued and are very aware of the need to do their best and be worthy members of this community. Although standards are still low, they are improving because pupils are having challenging targets set for their progress. Assessment systems to measure pupils' attainment and progress are well used by senior teachers, and increasingly so by class teachers also. As a result, any underachievement is promptly identified and extra support given to ensure vulnerable pupils are engaged and understand their learning.

Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are well supported. The school works well with parents and other agencies to support pupils most at risk. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, family liaison officer and leading behaviour professional are crucial in this regard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The challenges of creating a new school have been overcome and standards have not been allowed to slip during the period of change. The headteacher and her team have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development and their strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals. Senior leaders undertake rigorous and extensive monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and make exemplary use of the findings to successfully promote improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is focused on developing good practice and teachers are able to develop their skills through an extensive programme of support and professional development opportunities. The school consults widely with stakeholders and takes their views into account when planning actions and evaluating their impact. Governors provide a good balance of challenge and support. Regular visits to the school ensure that they are well informed. They monitor the work of the school and hold it to account for the standards achieved. Finances are rigorously monitored and the school makes good use

of its resources. Good partnerships have been developed with parents and with the local community. Parents are supportive and most are positive about the education that their children receive, although a small minority are concerned about some security issues. Parents spoke positively about the support that the school provides for them, particularly the breakfast club and parenting classes.

The progress made in implementing and evaluating actions to improve outcomes for pupils and the positive impact of those actions demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	3

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	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	2
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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and helping us with our inspection, and a special thank you to the school council and those of you who spoke to us about the work that you were doing.

Creating the new school has been quite a difficult task but you have all worked together to make a good start and now that most of the difficult things have been sorted out, the school is improving quickly. We think that some of the things that the school does are good and some things could be a bit better, so we have given the school a satisfactory grade. We saw how well you behave and how well you look after the school and each other. You told us that you enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. You said that you like eating healthy food and enjoy the opportunities you get to take exercise. Most of you are keen to learn and this helps you make satisfactory progress. Some of you work even harder and make more progress than expected.

The people who have responsibility for making decisions about your school know it very well and have some good ideas about how it can be made even better.

We want the school to make sure that all lessons are good enough to enable you to work as hard as you can and learn as much as you should, so that by the time you leave the school you know as much or more than other children who are your age. You can help by supporting each other and always trying to do your best.

We were pleased to see that you learn about how people in other countries live and what they believe, but we would like you to spend a bit more time learning about your own heritage.

We really enjoyed our two days at your school and look forward to hearing about your future successes.