

Greswold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104079
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308503
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Anne Pitt HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Lawlor
Headteacher	Jeremy Bird
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2003
School address	Buryfield Road Solihull B91 2AZ
Telephone number	01217 054738
Fax number	01217 051831

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement; the quality of teaching and learning; and how well the school's leadership promotes high standards. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussion with them, the staff, some parents and two governors, and a scrutiny of school documents. The details of the parents' questionnaires were kept confidential but the very few concerns raised by parents were pursued with the headteacher. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified.

Description of the school

Greswold is larger than most primary schools and is very popular. It is a multi-cultural school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but there is a significant proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic groups. However, no pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Fewer pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. The proportion identified by the school as having learning difficulties is below average.

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 outstanding features. Parents, overwhelmingly, are confident that the school delivers the best education for their children. One hundred and seventy six parents returned questionnaires and many wrote that they could not praise the school highly enough.

Children start in the Nursery with standards that are broadly at the level expected for their age. It is a credit to the dedicated staff that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they reach high standards which are better than most schools nationally and in Solihull. They make especially good progress in reading, mathematics and science but recent test results show that achievement in writing does not quite match this. However, this school does not rest on its laurels. The newly-formed dynamic leadership team has set challenging targets and introduced exciting initiatives to improve the situation. The writing lessons seen during the inspection show that these are starting to have a positive effect.

There is a strong sense of community in the school, many parents remarked on its 'family atmosphere'. This is due to the extremely good relationships between staff, pupils and their parents. Children are at the core of the school and encouraged to do well regardless of their ability. Attendance figures are very high and pupils' enthusiasm for school is due to the warm, friendly and safe environment in which they learn. The behaviour seen during the inspection was excellent because it is positively encouraged and rewarded. Pupils say that bullying and name-calling are rare and that adults deal with them quickly if they occur. The provision of toys and structured activities ensure that playtimes are harmonious.

One of the keys to the success of the school is the good quality of the teaching. Teachers are approachable, flexible and 'go the extra mile'. Parents remarked on how teachers are open and available to discuss issues and concerns. They are visible at the end of the day and regular newsletters and updates on the school website keep parents well informed.

The few lessons seen during the inspection ranged in quality from satisfactory to outstanding. Overall, however, taking account of the pupils' work, assessment results, and discussion with them, teaching and learning are good. This is because the staff have high expectations of behaviour, which encourages a strong work ethic. Pupils buckle down to tasks willingly, enthusiastically and concentrate very well. Homework levels are about right and pupils say that it is marked regularly. Typically, lessons are well planned and structured with a strong emphasis on pupils knowing what they need to do to improve. Work is usually set at the right level but occasionally the task is too limiting, for instance when a worksheet is too easy or when, in subjects other than English, it only allows the writing of one sentence when the pupils are capable of much more.

Teachers know their pupils well because of the effective assessment procedures. They review pupils' work regularly. Marking effectively identifies strengths and weaknesses, which lead to effective target setting to strengthen pupils' learning and inform future teaching. Detailed records of how individual pupils are progressing are kept. However, this data is not used sufficiently to track how well different groups and cohorts of pupils are doing in order to measure whether initiatives have a positive impact.

The school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum which provides a good academic, social, sporting and musical foundation. There is a tremendous variety of extras on offer during and after the school day. Although there is a limited time available on the school timetable for physical education, the wide range of sporting activities provided at other times makes sure

that pupils' health and well-being are successfully promoted. Pupils particularly enjoy educational visits, for example summer camp and study weeks. The curriculum also promotes community cohesion well. The school has a clear understanding of its own community and learners' needs. There is an effective strategy for engaging with the local and global community, through links with Beijing. Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in the community and are active in working with others. They are developing a firm understanding of the cultures of different types of people.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. All statutory safeguarding requirements are in place. A great strength of the school is the way in which vulnerable groups such as looked-after children and those with learning difficulties are helped to build self-esteem and progress well. This is due to the school's keenness to work closely with parents, carers and outside agencies, and to provide sensitive and targeted support when it is needed. One parent wrote, 'My child has thrived on the care and attention she has received. We have always been consulted and teachers have included her in concerts. This has helped to build confidence and independence in order to achieve her potential.'

There is an outstanding drive from the governors and headteacher to move the school forward. The headteacher has strong vision and his own style of inspirational leadership. The governors are active, focused, and have been instrumental in setting up effective performance management systems and a new staffing structure. The staff in charge of subjects are developing their leadership roles well and those responsible for mathematics and English have carried out a robust analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in these subjects. The school's views of its own effectiveness, as reflected in its self-evaluation form, are accurate. The school improvement plan shows that the school is tackling the right priorities but it is not clear how actions to tackle weaknesses will be measured. The headteacher is well aware of the general concerns that parents raised in the questionnaires. Parents spoken to during the inspection reported that he is proactive in dealing with issues such as those related to parking at the beginning and end of the school day.

In summary, the school provides a wholesome environment in which pupils can grow and develop in a good way. It succeeds well in realising its vision statement 'to provide an inclusive learning community where every child matters'. It has excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that by the time that they start Year 1, they generally exceed the national expectations for young children. The staff provide high quality care in a secure environment. Well-planned and purposeful practical activities engage the interests of children well. There is a good balance between the activities children can get on with unaided and those where adults teach specific skills. Independence is encouraged but work displayed on the walls suggests that children's individual creativity should be fostered even more. Children learn to behave and cooperate well because the staff are very positive in their approach. Every opportunity is taken to count aloud and extend children's speaking skills. The staff are skilled at making ongoing observations of children in order to track their progress but they are aware that there is a need to develop the accuracy of their judgements through training and moderation. The outdoor environment is attractive and caters very well for children's creative and physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing by 'lifting the lid' on the tasks set and ensuring that high quality writing is encouraged in all subjects.
- Use assessment data to effectively measure the school's success and track the progress of different groups of pupils more accurately.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	1
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 welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

What I liked most about your school:

- you enjoy school, and do well in reading, mathematics and science
- you get on really well with each other and your behaviour is excellent
- adults take extremely good care of you so that you feel happy and safe in school
- lessons are usually good
- there are lots of lunchtime and after-school activities
- the headteacher, staff and governors are very keen to help your school get even better.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- make sure that the writing work you are given is always demanding
- look at your assessment results in more detail to see how groups of you are doing and if the school is succeeding.

You are very lucky that you go to such a good school where everyone gets on very well. I hope that you will do your best to make it even better.



6 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greswold Primary School, Solihull B91 2 AZ

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Yours sincerely

Anne Pitt
HMI