

Greenbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105768
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308944
Inspection date	5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	John Gornall 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	393
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Yusuf Khan
Headteacher	Mr Paul Gibbs (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Greenbank Road Rochdale Lancashire OL12 0HZ
Telephone number	01706 647923
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the senior managers in moving the school forward. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons across the school, scrutinising school documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils, support staff, senior managers and the acting headteacher. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but HMI found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were broadly justified although a little over-generous in some aspects, and this has been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated in an urban area of Rochdale where there is significant social and economic deprivation. The vast majority of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, mainly Asian British Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Ninety five per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language. A higher proportion of pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. Just over a quarter have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly language, emotional and social difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties. This is higher than in most schools. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs. When pupils start in the Nursery and Reception classes, their knowledge and skills are much lower than expected for their age, especially in language and social development. Due to the secondment of the substantive headteacher to the local authority, the school is being led by an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Greenbank Primary provides a good quality of education and some aspects of its provision are outstanding. The school is particularly effective in welcoming, supporting and encouraging the many pupils who begin their time in school having had limited experience of the English language. The school's accommodation is bright, colourful and well-maintained and visitors soon realise that this is a nice place to be. The school also has particular strengths in the good care and support it provides for pupils who feel safe, valued and ready to learn and in the outstanding promotion of their personal development and well-being. The school's self-evaluation painted slightly too positive a picture of its effectiveness, but was generally accurate in identifying what is done well and where improvement is needed.

From a very low start, the majority of pupils make good progress so that by the time they leave the school they attain standards that are satisfactory and similar to the national average. Those pupils who start school having had little experience of the English language make at least good, and in some cases outstanding, progress in their acquisition of oral and written communication skills. In other areas of work, although progress is good overall, the pattern is not even across the school. This is because the quality of teaching and learning varies between that which is satisfactory and that which is outstanding; it is good overall. This variation in teaching is an important factor because although many of the pupils struggle initially through their lack of experience of the English language, they also demonstrate an enthusiasm and keenness for learning. As a result, when they are faced with outstanding teaching, the pupils make correspondingly excellent progress. In a few lessons, the diet of work provided for the whole class is too similar and potentially higher attaining pupils make steady rather than good progress. An example would be in mathematics, where none of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reached Level 3 in mathematics in the 2007 national tests.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. A significant contributory factor is the high number of trained additional support staff who are effectively deployed in lessons. They join in with teachers' planning meetings and are aware of the school's priorities. During lessons they help to keep the pupils productively on task. The teachers' plans and the work displayed in classrooms and around the school indicate a broad curriculum is offered to the pupils.

The school rightly judges the pupils' personal development to be outstanding. The pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes are excellent. Pupils are polite and friendly; they demonstrate a good understanding of what is right and fair and what is not. Older pupils act as playground pals for younger pupils during break-times and regard this work very seriously. The pupils said that Greenbank is a safe and friendly school where occasionally pupils fall out with one another but arguments are quickly settled and 'you can always get help from a teacher or helper'. The pupils were also enthusiastic about their teachers and enjoyed going on visits and taking part in activities with them after school.

The care, guidance and support offered to the pupils is good; the school graded itself as outstanding. Staff know the pupils well and they offer good role models for them as shown by the way they model correct spoken English. Parents regard the school as having a caring, supportive environment. Ninety five per cent of the questionnaires returned to the inspector were extremely positive about the school. One parent wrote, 'the staff take good care of the children, especially for the children whose parents can't speak English'. Discussions with the

pupils showed they also appreciated the caring nature of the staff. The pupils, however, were far less confident when talking about their work. In particular, they were not really sure how well they were doing and were uncertain about any targets for improvement. This reflects, to some extent, the variable quality of the feedback that pupils receive through marking and also the lack of understanding of what their personal targets are. There is some very good practice in school but this is not consistent across classes or year groups.

The school graded itself as outstanding for leadership and management; the inspector found it to be good. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by other members of the senior management team. It is clear that the acting headteacher pays high regard to knowing each pupil in school well and in his verbal exchanges with them is able to make individual pupils feel special. Staff have worked hard to improve how they monitor and track the pupils' progress and set challenging targets. This work has been particularly timely and effective in raising expectations in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. The school is aware that the analysis of the information gained requires further refinement, particularly in relation to how this informs the setting of individual and group targets for the pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Parents appreciate the importance given by staff in the Foundation Stage to English language development and in helping the youngest and most vulnerable children settle quickly into the life of the school. The emphasis on practical activities in the Nursery and Reception has contributed much to the good progress made by the children in conversing and getting on with others. Resources in the Nursery and classroom are of good quality and are well organised and managed. Careful records are kept of the children's progress and these are used to help plan to meet their diverse needs. The excellent support that children receive in the basic skills and in their personal and social development gives them the confidence to succeed in the next stage of their learning. By the end of their time in Nursery and Reception, many children have achieved most of the expected goals in the areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that potentially higher attaining pupils are clearly identified and the work provided for them better meets their needs.
- Improve the quality of the feedback and guidance given to pupils so they know how well they are doing and what their next targets are.
- Further refine the systems for tracking pupils' progress to enable the setting of appropriately matched targets for individual pupils so that all achieve well.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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.

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. I really enjoyed talking to you and it was a great pleasure to take part in some of your lessons. A special thank you to the little girl in Reception who made me a plasticine pancake!

You obviously enjoy life at Greenbank Primary School. Many of you told me how much you like the company of your teachers, not only in lessons but also during after-school activities. I agree with you, and your parents, that Greenbank is a good school in which you are very well cared for. Most of your lessons are really interesting and help you to make good progress. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on well with each other and help to make the school a happy place to be. Well done!

To help Greenbank to become even better, this is what I have asked the governors, headteacher and teachers to do:

- Make sure that the work they set for you really makes you think (sometimes the work you do now is a bit too easy for some of you).
- Make sure that you and your parents or carers know how well you are doing and what you should do next to improve your work.
- Make sure that you have targets to aim for to help you achieve even better than you are doing now.

I know that you will work hard to keep Greenbank growing from strength to strength!