

Greswell Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106219
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309058
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Cannon Cassidy
Headteacher	Mrs C Mylchreest
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Percy Road Denton Manchester Lancashire M34 2DH
Telephone number	161 3366854
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased significantly in recent years and is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The school has achieved the Investors in People and Healthy School awards. Before and after-school care is provided on site as part of the school's work to extend local community links.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Greswell provides a satisfactory and improving education for all of its pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils are mindful of others and enjoy the chances they have to express themselves through the art, music and dance from different countries. Their increasing awareness of religious beliefs and festivals gives them better understanding about how communities can work together. Pupils enjoy school. They say they like lessons because there is a lot of practical work and they confirm that playtimes are safe and fun. Attendance is average. The majority of pupils behave well and are tolerant of others. However, an issue raised by some parents and which is supported by inspection findings, is the significant minority of pupils in the lower Key Stage 2 classes who do not have well-developed social skills. The disruption to some lessons is a hindrance to their own and others' progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to maintain healthy lifestyles. They follow guidance about healthy snacks and are very keen to take part in activities such as 'Wake up and Shake up' before school starts. Pupils contribute well to the life of their school by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. The school council gives all pupils the opportunity to share their good ideas leading, for example, to charity fund-raising and improved playground and toilet facilities. Year 6 pupils are currently producing a DVD version of the school prospectus with a music backing and a voice-over commentary. Eco-minded pupils collect paper for recycling, while others help with the many daily routines around the school. Pupils' steady progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) helps them to prepare satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop independent skills and take the initiative in their own learning.

National test data for 2007 showed a decline in standards and achievement at Key Stage 2. Decisive action from school leaders has reversed that picture and assessments show that current standards at both key stages are in line with national expectations for those age groups. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Rigorous and accurate assessment and tracking enables the teachers to plan effectively and to set the pupils targets for improvement. These measures are having more of an impact in literacy than in mathematics and science. This is because in literacy teachers use the pupils' targets more effectively and the pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve. This is helping to improve teaching and standards in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is implementing a basic skills action plan to address falling standards. This is having a positive impact and is leading to improved progress for most pupils. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their needs are identified at the earliest stage and effective intervention strategies are put in place to support them.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, this is not consistent. This results in slower progress for some pupils. The school provides a good curriculum. It meets most pupils' varying needs well and helps them to enjoy their learning. It is enriched well, not only by out-of-class activities, but in the way the school draws on the expertise of parents, for example, to provide dance lessons.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is clear direction and a strong commitment to school improvement. In steering the school through a difficult period

of staff changes and management restructuring, the headteacher has established a fully supportive team who share accountability for achievement and standards across the whole school. Improved assessment systems are leading to better teaching and learning.

Attainment targets for 2008 are likely to be met and higher targets have been set for 2009. The senior leaders ensure that checks on the school's performance are rigorous and contribute to the accurate evaluation of the school's work. Governors know the school well. Accurate and detailed information provided by the school enables them to challenge and support effectively. Finances are managed carefully to ensure satisfactory value for money. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Effective leadership and management mean that all children get off to a good start. When they first enter Nursery, their abilities are below expectations for their age across all areas of their learning. Because of the exciting range of learning activities planned for them, children make good progress. An example of this was when a group of Nursery children investigated how water changed as they added various things such as glitter, washing up liquid or large ice cubes. The teacher used the opportunity well to question children about what happened in order to develop their vocabulary and language skills.

By the time they leave Reception, almost all are working securely within their expected goals, but very few exceed all of them. There are good arrangements for transfer to Year 1, so that children are well prepared for their next stages in learning.

Teachers focus well on encouraging children's personal, social and emotional skills. Consequently, children quickly learn to follow daily routines, share resources and play amicably alongside one another. Daily sessions that focus on letters and sounds help children to attempt reading and writing more confidently. The very well resourced outside learning area is generally used effectively to give children opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through physical activity. Nevertheless, opportunities to extend children's learning in this way are sometimes missed. All Foundation Stage staff assess children's skills and check on their progress. The information enables adults to effectively plan the next steps in children's learning. Relationships with parents are very strong. There are good procedures to introduce parents and their children to the Nursery, as well as opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's progress and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning.
- Improve the behaviour of the pupils who disrupt others' learning.
- Ensure teachers use pupils' targets in mathematics and science more effectively so that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has taken effective action to reverse the fall in Year 6 standards indicated by the 2007 national test results. Currently, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. The recent school initiative to improve writing is paying off and standards and achievement are rising. Standards in mathematics and science, although improving, have not improved at the same rate as those in English. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress in relation to their individual targets. This is because their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place. The school's improved tracking systems allow all pupils' progress to be closely tracked to make sure their pace of learning is maintained.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are enthusiastic about school because they enjoy the varied range of activities offered. Many start the day early at the Toast Club and stay on after school to take part in sports or, for example, the science club. Most pupils take pride in their work. They are keen to point out examples of what they have done or to demonstrate their linguistic abilities in Spanish or French. They appreciate the healthy food choices available at lunchtimes. Year 6 pupils check the choices other pupils make to ensure a healthy balance is maintained. Pupils carry out their assigned duties conscientiously and are mostly polite and cooperative. A few, however, display unacceptable behaviour in lessons and this disrupts other pupils' learning. Pupils contribute well to their community through the school council and by joining in local events such as concerts or helping to reclaim areas of neglected land adjacent to the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning ranges between outstanding and satisfactory. Recent training is having a positive impact on improving teachers' subject knowledge and skills. It is enabling them to plan more challenging lessons and, in particular, to make good use of electronic whiteboards to demonstrate mathematical ideas or practical science activities. Teachers use imaginative ways to interest pupils in their learning by the use of games, stories and practical resources. In a literacy lesson, the electronic whiteboard was used to display a story about an elephant calf who did not listen to parents' advice. Afterwards, pupils enjoyed planning similar stories using human characters. This gave them lots to write about as well as promoting their good personal development. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning during independent work, but frequently have too passive a role during the first part of the lesson. Pupils' work in English is generally marked well and guides them effectively towards improving their work. However, there are also examples of marking of pupils' writing in other subjects, which is not as helpful. In most classes, but not all, relationships are positive and pupils work hard.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's strong focus on writing across all subjects has paid dividends by improving writing quality, especially in Year 2 where an increased number of pupils achieved higher than expected levels for their age. Provision in ICT has improved since the last inspection. The programme to develop pupils personally and socially and to teach health education and citizenship is well established. Input from the emergency services, for example, raises pupils' awareness of potential hazards outside school. Lessons to help pupils deal with social and emotional issues also alert them to the dangers of drugs as well as insecure relationships. Overall, pupils are prepared well to make informed choices about their personal well-being. Out-of-class provision is good and has a strong impact on pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of learning. After-school clubs are well attended and pupils say they would like an even greater choice. Visits and visitors enliven topic work and residential visits for pupils in Years 4 to 6 are always a cause for enthusiasm and excitement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school. All staff members know the pupils and their families well and are prepared to go the 'extra mile' to help the most vulnerable. The work of designated support staff has significant influence in helping these pupils maintain their attendance and to access learning. Every opportunity is taken to involve parents in the life of the school and to help them work as partners in their children's learning. Pupils receive clear guidance about safety. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. The school continually seeks ways to help the small number of pupils whose behaviour is difficult to manage. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Whole-school systems to track pupils' academic progress are good. Teachers use assessment information to good effect in literacy but it is not yet well enough used in mathematics and science to have a good impact on pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher gives the school a clear direction on the path to improvement. She is supported well by an energetic and committed leadership team which shares responsibility for checking the school's performance and maintaining the drive for higher standards. Leaders have effectively raised the school's ambitions and set challenging targets for the future. Teachers' professional development is closely linked to whole-school priorities. Performance management has reaffirmed the focus on achievement and standards. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Subject leaders have a clear overview of developments in their particular areas of responsibility but are not yet fully involved in evaluating standards and checking on the quality of provision in their subjects in order to identify areas for improvement. Governors ensure that statutory obligations are met and support the school's progress.

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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
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	3

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	3

Personal development and well-being

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

Inspection of Greswell Primary School and Nursery, Manchester, M34 2DH

On behalf of the inspectors, I must thank you for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your politeness and happy faces made it a real pleasure to be with you. No wonder you are always smiling when you have such smashing school lunches! It was pleasing to find out how much you enjoy school and that most of you attend more regularly. That's important. Keep it up everyone and don't let 6C have it all their own way in the attendance race.

It was also pleasing to find that your standards are improving and that you are making satisfactory progress. The grown-ups in school take really good care of you and you have a super range of activities to help make school fun. Your headteacher works very hard to make sure all of you get the best possible help with your learning.

Your school is satisfactory overall but your parents, teachers and governors would like to see your school become even better. We discussed ways to help this to happen with your headteacher and agreed on some 'targets'.

Your teachers have been asked to try to make every lesson as good as the very best. A few of you in the lower junior classes should behave better in some lessons so that others can always get on with their work. Finally, it would be better if you all knew your numeracy and science targets as well as you know your targets for literacy. That will help you to make even better progress.