

# Great Leighs Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114852
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311730
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Taylor

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R. Falco
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R. Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Aragon Road Great Leighs Chelmsford Essex CM3 1RP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 361254
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 361004

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Great Leighs Primary school is smaller than many and serves the village and surrounding areas. The school has seen a period of rapid growth recently, due to new housing; this means increasing numbers of pupils are joining mid-term. Nearly all pupils are White British. When children start school, their knowledge and skills are in line with national expectations for this age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low overall, with wide variations between year groups. The school was awarded the Investors in People status in 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Great Leighs Primary is a satisfactory school, which has coped well with rapidly expanding numbers. It benefits from a dedicated headteacher, an experienced team of staff and a much-improved high quality learning environment. Parents are overwhelming in their support for the school and for the headteacher in particular. One said 'This is a very special school with a headteacher who is passionate about the welfare and development of all pupils'. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have provided stability through ensuring pupils' steady rate of progress. However, they have not yet managed to accelerate this rate of progress year on year, so raising standards further. This is because they are not fully involved in rigorously checking the school's work in order to secure quicker improvements. The school's view of how well it is doing was initially more generous than the inspection judgements. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

A satisfactory standard of teaching ensures pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make consistently good progress in science, where standards are usually above average. Teachers are more confident and skilled in teaching science; aspects of science are combined into many other lessons, with lots of practical work, so that pupils get a good grounding. Pupils' standards in all areas are broadly in line with national averages and they are continuing to make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is improving and some high quality lessons were seen. Consequently, the rate of progress pupils make is greater in some classes than in others. Pupils learn really well in lessons which involve them fully in hands-on activities. Less successful lessons were slower paced and resources, for example, interactive white boards, were not used to their full potential. Pupils' personal development is good and they really enjoy the wide range of sports, clubs and outside visits. This ensures that they keep fit, healthy and enjoy being at school. They are well looked after because there is a strong caring ethos in this school. Whilst they are supported in many ways, the guidance on improving their work through marking, advice and targets is satisfactory, but not having enough of an impact yet to be good. The satisfactory curriculum is in a state of change in order to ensure that it continually appeals to pupils and keeps them fully engaged in their learning.

A skilled team of governors provide valuable and relevant guidance and advice to school leadership. They are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to encouraging higher standards and are working hard to achieve this. They are satisfactory at present because it is early days with regard to the impact of their efforts.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

A good induction programme ensures that children settle well into Reception. Staff build carefully on the children's readiness to learn and quickly establish expectations and helpful routines. These create an ethos where children feel happy and secure. Staff are particularly effective in extending children's personal, social and emotional development and progress here is good. Children enjoy their learning and behave well. Teaching ensures that children make satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they are securely working at the levels expected for their age.

The satisfactory curriculum ensures that children have experience of all the recommended areas of learning. However, planning does not give guidance on how this learning should be developed outside the classroom as a daily happening. Insufficient resources are available to develop the children's learning through investigation, enquiry and outdoor learning. There was, however, some recent good work during 'birdwatch weekend' which has created much interest from children and involvement of parents!

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by ensuring a greater consistency of at least good teaching and assessment so that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Develop planning and resources for outside learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Develop the role of those with leadership responsibilities so that sharper monitoring and evaluation leads to quicker improvement.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children achieve satisfactorily and make adequate progress in the Foundation Stage. They arrive broadly in line with national expectations and subsequently enter Year 1 with nationally expected standards. They continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, reaching broadly average levels in English, mathematics and science. These results are part of a stable trend. Performance in Key Stage 2 is more variable, showing occasionally good, but generally satisfactory achievement. Results for 2007 confirm pupils made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Progress accelerates in Year 6 where teaching is consistently strong. Overall, the rate of progress across the school is variable and a reflection of the mixed picture of teaching. Science is traditionally a stronger area, where standards are generally above average and pupils are consistently making good and occasionally exceptional progress. The school is setting targets with an adequate level of challenge, but its success in reaching them is inconsistent. Pupils of all abilities are progressing at similar rates, with no differences according to circumstance or level of need. Standards seen in the artwork on display are high.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a strong area of the school's work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Work from a wide range of renowned artists, used as a starting point for pupils' own creations, makes a clear contribution to their cultural development. Pupils' good behaviour stems from clear expectations and guidance and consistency of approach by staff, generating a very positive atmosphere in school. Pupils recognise unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying, and understand the impact of their actions on others. They are supportive and considerate, for example, by supporting each other at the Friendship Stops at playtimes. They give generously of their time to the community, particularly through the work of the school council, where they are supporting school improvement well. They are fully involved in local community events and are keen to raise funds to support others less fortunate than themselves. Attendance is satisfactory. It is not as high as it was because some families are increasingly taking holidays

in term time. Good personal and social skills combined with a level of financial awareness gained through using the school bank, together with average achievement in basic skills, ensure pupils are adequately prepared for their lives ahead.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Where teaching is more successful, planning is good and takes into account the varying needs of all pupils. Teachers have a precise understanding of what they want pupils to learn and share this clearly, often reinforcing it at key points in the lesson, so that pupils are aware of what they are doing and why. Expectations are high and the pace of learning brisk so that pupils make good progress. In the lessons that are satisfactory, these elements are not so well established and so progress is slower. Activities do not always ensure that pupils are fully involved in the lesson. There have been some recent improvements to the quality of teachers' marking but it is still not as helpful as it could be. It often omits to tell pupils what they should do to improve or where they have done particularly well. A successful feature of all teaching is the good relationships staff have with pupils. This, in turn, supports the good management of behaviour and the friendly, supportive atmosphere in lessons. Learning assistants provide good support for those who need extra help.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy a good range of sports, visits (they went to Oaklands Museum during the inspection) and other activities, all of which are helping to broaden their range of interests and outlook. Artwork is good and there is some imaginative and thoughtful work on display, showing how pupils are learning a wide range of artistic skills as well as developing their cultural awareness. The curriculum for science is strong and has ensured pupils have consistently made good gains in their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum is currently being reviewed to ensure that it really appeals to pupils, that subjects are linked together more and that basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and computer skills are incorporated as much as possible. In addition, the school is checking each subject plan to ensure that the skills pupils are taught are carefully built on year by year and that there are no gaps.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good and helps pupils to develop into happy learners. Good relationships between adults and pupils encourage pupils to share their concerns and this helps them to feel safe. Pupils with communication difficulties and those who need additional support in lessons make satisfactory progress. This is because their needs are recognised and appropriate support provided. All procedures to help keep pupils safe and secure are firmly in place. Academic guidance through, for example, target setting and enabling pupils to evaluate and improve their own work, is not yet solidly embedded into everyday practice. As a result, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work or what to aim for.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a passionate determination to see it improve. He ensures there is a happy, safe learning environment in which care and respect for all are highly valued. Relationships with parents, businesses, other schools and the community are strong. Good parental links help by encouraging support for learning at home; external organisations provide a variety of activities and projects which enrich pupils' school lives.

Monitoring of the school's work is successful in ensuring pupils generally make steady progress in their basic skills and good progress in science. It has not yet been successful in accelerating progress beyond this level. The school does not have an entirely realistic view of how well it is doing because it does not take enough account of how successful learning is. Checking for quality does not involve leaders enough in swiftly diagnosing weaknesses, putting plans in place to overcome them and then making sure improvements are working. School improvement plans are not tightly linked into achieving the targets the school sets itself.

Staffing levels have been very stable in recent years, providing the school with continuity and experience. Governors are currently beginning to extend opportunities for staff to see good practice and fresh ideas in settings beyond the school.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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?	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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**

30 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Great Leighs Primary School, Great Leighs, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 1RP

Thank you for making us so welcome when Ms Frith and I visited you recently. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed our time with you all. I am writing to tell you what we found out and how you can help the school improve.

You are well behaved and we are pleased to see that you enjoy school so much. This is because you have so many exciting things to do. You are very lucky to have such a lovely school building in such a beautiful setting. We think your artwork is impressive and a higher standard than we usually see, so well done. We were pleased with how well you usually do in science and doing so many experiments in lessons is really helping.

We think you are doing fine in your English and mathematics, but could be doing even better. Therefore, we have asked Mr Thomas and everyone to do the following.

- Help you do really well in your literacy and numeracy by making your lessons fun and interesting all of the time.
- Give the very youngest children more chances to learn outside, often through finding things out and discovering for themselves.
- Check more carefully on how well everything is working so that your school can get even better quickly.

You can help by keeping on working and trying hard.

With best wishes

Mrs A Taylor Lead inspector