

Little Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117132
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312505
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Richard Cheetham

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Lloyd
Headteacher	Mr Graham Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Lincoln Drive Croxley Green Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 3NJ
Telephone number	01923773861
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues: have high Year 6 standards been maintained with particular attention to relative weaknesses in writing and mathematics; how effectively are literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills taught in other subjects; how effectively is the school planning for the strategic development of the curriculum? Evidence was gathered from school documents and data, parental questionnaires, interviews with pupils, staff and the vice-chair of governors and observations of teaching and school activities. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail and the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large and popular junior school. The number on roll has increased since the previous inspection and it has reached its planned admission limit. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a minority are from Pakistani and other ethnic minority groups. All speak English as their first language. The school serves a suburban community of above average social and economic disadvantages. The proportion of pupils eligible to free school meals is well below average and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. Most pupils start school with above expected attainment although it is not as good in writing as in other aspects of English. The school has the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school gives excellent value for money because pupils consistently achieve very highly and reach well above average standards. It has made excellent progress since the previous inspection and has an excellent capacity for this to continue. This is because the school's excellent leadership and management are focused on helping all pupils to do as well as they can through outstanding teaching and learning and including every pupil in its full and varied curriculum. Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent because the school maintains these as a fundamental priority in its excellent care and guidance practice. Pupils feel very safe in school because they are known well as individuals and there are robust health and safety systems. Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the school's efforts and typical of many questionnaire comments is this, 'I have found Little Green to be an exceptional school, providing excellent learning opportunities along with socialising guidance and pastoral care.'

The school has very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and sets them challenging targets which they mostly reach and sometimes exceed. It has maintained very high standards in English, mathematics and science for several years because it assesses pupils' progress accurately, diagnoses any difficulties they may have and provides very well targeted additional support to help them improve. This is particularly true of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for whom provision is outstanding. In this and in other areas, such as pupil transfer and support, the school has excellent links with outside agencies. Through its analysis of pupils' progress, the school pinpoints slight shortfalls in performance as in writing or aspects of mathematics, such as division, and helps pupils make improvements. Extra drama lessons for instance, provide pupils with the motivation to write and help higher attaining pupils make recent, very rapid progress.

The curriculum's outstanding breadth and balance give all pupils opportunities to make the best of themselves. Within the school day, there is time for pupils to sing and reflect together, to learn about other cultures and faiths, to exercise vigorously and safely, to act responsibly towards one another as well as increasingly practise the skills of English and, significantly, ICT in other subjects. Typically, the school wishes to go further and fine tune the curriculum it offers. Subject leaders have audited provision but the school has not planned in enough detail how to carry this forward beyond the current year. Staff keep a very close check on pupils' academic development and provide timely challenge and guidance so that they make at least good progress.

Pupils greatly enjoy their time at school and their parents confirm this view. Pupils' attendance is well above average and they are eager to take part in the 24 extra activities offered weekly. The school ensures that all who go to clubs that run teams have at least one chance to represent the school. Visits, such as to Tate Modern, inspire older pupils to research artists and produce high quality art during follow up lessons. Pupils make regular visits to the local area and visitors, such as faith leaders or drama groups, add relevance to lessons. The school maintains a record of gifted and talented pupils and arranges extra provision within the school and in partnership with others to extend their learning further.

Teaching and learning are outstanding because teachers make learning interesting through the variety of activities they offer that are closely matched to pupils' abilities. They have expert subject knowledge beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, such as in music and modern foreign languages, so that they teach with confidence and conviction. Pupils

become assured learners because teachers' explanations are clear and skilled questioning provides further challenges. Well-briefed learning support assistants lead the work of small groups of pupils to very good effect. Pupils respond well to this provision, behaving excellently and knowing increasingly well how to improve, for example in their writing when they edit their own work. A wide variety of pupils' work is displayed prominently to encourage high standards and pupils are grouped in different ways to make teaching and learning well-focused and effective. Assessment is accurate so that in their writing for instance, pupils have precise targets and further guidance in teachers' marking so that they know how to improve. The use of more precise targets in mathematics is a current project.

The school listens carefully to its pupils through surveys and the influential school council. Staff involve them significantly in decisions about the school. Pupils enthusiastically carry out their duties, such as acting as play leaders, because they have a real sense of contributing to the school community. This goes beyond the school gates, for instance through pupils' involvement with the local elderly community and with pupils' decisions to support charities in creative ways. Taking part in these decisions prepares them very well for later life, especially when these skills are allied to their competence in basic skills and their use of ICT equipment, such as personal digital assistants (hand-held computers).

The major reason for the school's sustained improvement is the excellent work of the headteacher. His reflective and inspirational leadership has built a strong and committed senior team in partnership with a knowledgeable and challenging governing body. They have shared values, evaluate the school's work rigorously, plan to finance improvements carefully and constantly look for new approaches. An example of this is teachers' research partnerships. These pilot innovative methods of teaching and learning on behalf of their colleagues before weaving them into school practice. This considered approach revitalises the curriculum while maintaining high standards. Leadership is very well devolved so that all teachers contribute to school improvement. A good example is how subject leaders add to the school's detailed evaluation processes with their annual subject audits. This extends their professional development, promotes continuity, capitalises on staff skills and prompts further development through their action plans.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan for further curriculum development beyond the current year.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

13 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Green Junior School, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 3NJ

Thank you for making me so welcome to your school when I inspected it recently. Although I could not meet all of you in such a big school, I did enjoy talking to the School Council representatives at our working lunch and as many others as I could. I was very impressed by how politely and clearly you answered my questions, how seriously you take your responsibilities and how much you help one another. This letter is to tell you what I learned during the day with you.

You can be proud of your outstanding school, your high achievements and the part you play in helping it improve. You told me how much you enjoy school, how safe you feel and how some of you like it so much that you will be sad to leave. However, the school has prepared you very well to make your next step to secondary school with all the confidence that you now show at Little Green. It helps you all learn well and achieve as much as you can by teaching you excellently and providing such a wide range of interesting activities inside and outside school hours.

Your headteacher sets a fine example for you to follow. He and the senior staff and governors do an excellent job and to help the school carry on improving, I have asked them to plan in more detail to make what you learn even more challenging and interesting.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Richard Cheetham

Lead inspector