

Greenfields Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 117193 |
| Local Authority | HERTFORDSHIRE LA |
| Inspection number | 312528 |
| Inspection date | 20 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Robert Drew |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 228 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Diane Hible |
| Headteacher | Mrs Helen Cook |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 October 2003 |
| School address | Ellesborough Close Watford Hertfordshire WD19 6QH |
| Telephone number | 02084281166 |
| Fax number | 02084216485 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement; the overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; pupils' personal development and the quality of the care, guidance and support that promotes it. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils, governors and extensive school documentation including its self-evaluation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no reason to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is average in size taking pupils from a range of backgrounds in central Watford. On balance pupils are not significantly disadvantaged economically, but far fewer than average come from homes with experience of higher education. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but attainment on entry is below average. The great majority of pupils are White British with about 8% coming from several minority ethnic communities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory overall, with some areas already strong and good capacity to improve further. Recent improvements reflect the way leadership has stabilised after several years of disruptive change. While the current impact of leadership and management is satisfactory, the headteacher and her leadership team provide a very clear sense of direction and have shown they can introduce beneficial changes. One of these has been to establish effective leadership and good progress in the Foundation Stage. Another is to ensure consistently strong teaching in Year 2. In addition, the inclusion coordinator is having good impact on provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are now progressing satisfactorily with some making good progress. Improved plans exist for promoting the performance of more able pupils.

Pupils' progress and achievement have returned to satisfactory levels and their academic standards in both key stages are broadly average. Pupils' progress between Years 2 and 6 was significantly below expectations in 2007, especially in English and mathematics. Results in Year 6 had been above average for several years until poor performance in 2007. The school has taken steps to change this. Pupils' attitudes are now overwhelmingly positive, and the coordination of English and mathematics much stronger. As a result the work of current Year 6 pupils is of a higher standard than last year and is on track to match national averages. The school's longer-term targets for pupils in Key Stage 2 rightly take account of their relatively weak performance in Key Stage 1, but tend to underplay recent improvements in teaching, progress tracking systems and pupils' personal development. Thus targets do not contribute as strongly as they should to raising standards and promoting good, as opposed to satisfactory, achievement.

The school has taken effective action in countering significant underperformance in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. Standards are rising in response to good teaching in some classes and the removal of weak teaching in others. Emphasis has been placed on greater involvement of pupils in lessons and providing more scope for them to reach the higher levels. Current work by Year 2 is close to national standards and better than that of previous years.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and sometimes very effective. There are lessons where the tight structure and brisk tempo encourage rapid progress. Some teachers are particularly good at offering praise and seeing where pupils need help to understand a key point securely. In all lessons, relationships are good and staff are clear about their aims for pupils. Questioning by teachers is perceptive and good at making pupils think, particularly in Year 6 lessons. Extension work for the most able is offered in some circumstances, but not consistently. Not enough use is made of assessment and levels to define high quality performance in specific tasks, and to direct pupils' improvement. In lessons observed which were satisfactory, teachers were a little slower to notice when pupils had finished tasks and were ready to learn more.

Care, guidance and support are good and, as a result, pupils' personal development is good. Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met and pupils say they feel very safe at school. None report fear from bullying. Extensive sports activities of which many are extra-curricular, and healthy meals have helped pupils to become good at adopting healthier lifestyles. The school shows them the importance of being reflective, respecting others and being willing to contribute. Assemblies and the personal, health and social education programme

play a significant role. Staff provide good role models and apply the school's policies consistently. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are all good. They behave well and show constructive attitudes. Attendance has risen to satisfactory levels. Pupils participate well within school, for instance through the school council, and are active in helping in the wider community. Aspects of lessons and special multicultural events help them develop good awareness of other cultures. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

The school is good at self-evaluation. Strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified. There has been time to rectify some deficiencies but the full impact on standards and progress is not yet evident. Teaching and learning, while stronger than a year ago, show scope for further improvement. The school is right to evaluate its curriculum as satisfactory overall. Strengths are matched by aspects beginning to develop, such as scope for creativity and additional provision for underperforming pupils. Some subject leaders are new in post and have not had time to influence outcomes in their areas of responsibility. The Governing Body's impact on the school's work has fluctuated, but is now satisfactory. For instance, they help parents and the wider community to view the school positively. The senior leadership team has also strengthened parental involvement with the 'Friends of Greenfields' becoming a large and influential group. Questionnaire returns show very strong parental support for the school, especially for its leadership.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is much improved and is now good. The coordinator's leadership is promoting high expectations amongst children, colleagues and parents. Children arrive with many areas of weakness, especially in aspects of their communication, physical and social skills. Good teaching and learning enable children to progress well in all these areas. Typically, lessons are engaging and practical. They have clear structure and focus to help children understand what they are learning. They have ample scope for choosing activities as well as following their teachers' initiatives. Nursery facilities allow easy integration of indoor and outdoor activities. Staff evaluate children's initial needs accurately and shape teaching accordingly. Regular subsequent assessment ensures progress is secure. Records indicate lack of effective teaching in the past in Reception, but teaching is now secure, allowing children to continue improving their social skills and basic academic skills and knowledge. The curriculum for both Nursery and Reception classes has recently been closely integrated to ensure children lose no momentum in transferring from one to the other. Standards have risen at the end of Reception, and children are closer to the expected levels than in previous years.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by making sure all lessons have strong pace, include good strategies for stretching the most able pupils and make better use of assessment levels to define high quality work.
- Ensure standards in both key stages continue to rise by setting progressively more challenging targets for Years 2 and 6.

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.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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 | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenfields Primary School, Watford, WD19 6QH

Thank you for the pleasant welcome you gave inspectors when we visited your school recently. We are especially grateful to those of you who showed us around or spoke with us at lunch time. The school has done well to become satisfactory following a time when standards were too low. Several things are already successful and we think that your school will improve a lot more in future.

- Already your behaviour and attitudes are good. You say that you like school, as do your parents who are very happy with it, and you act positively in lessons. School is helping you to become increasingly confident and responsible.
- The Foundation Stage classes give you a good start. They are well organised and help younger pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher and her senior staff give the school clear leadership and they have shown they are good at improving things. For instance, standards had fallen in Year 2 tests, but are rising again. Year 6 standards are also rising.
- There is good teaching in some of your lessons. Here, things move along quickly, you are keen to take part and your teachers make clear how you can improve your work.

So that your school becomes even more successful, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure more lessons are like the best, with a lively pace, regular work to stretch the more able and use of levels to show what high quality work looks like;
- plan for higher standards in both key stages over the next few years by setting more challenging targets.

You can help by always trying your best and joining in lessons and activities. Best wishes for your futures at Greenfields.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Drew

Lead inspector