

Greenvale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118317
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	312882
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shanie Dengate
Headteacher	Elizabeth Caldwell
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Symons Avenue Chatham ME4 5UP
Telephone number	01634 409521
Fax number	01634 819823

Age group	4-7
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Inspection number	312882

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is in an urban area of very high deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above average. There is high mobility amongst pupils. There are also high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils of a variety of other ethnic origins for whom English is an additional language. There is a nurture group which forms a separate mixed-age class for the majority of the timetable.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Excellent pastoral care is a great strength of the school. Indeed, parents greatly appreciate the care and support given to their children as well as the education the school provides, as reflected in the comment 'I cannot praise Greenvale School highly enough.'

Children join Reception with exceptionally low skills, but skilful teaching helps them to make good progress through the school and they achieve well. By the end of Year 2, standards are still lower than average, but are moving in the right direction towards average. The high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The many children who come into the school from other countries without a knowledge of English are extremely well supported by the school so that they make even better progress than their peers and often exceed their targets.

Pupils feel very safe and secure in school and they understand how to live healthy lifestyles. They clearly enjoy school and grow in confidence as they develop good personal and social skills. When asked what they liked best about their school, one of a group of Year 2 children said 'I like all of the school.' Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance rates and they are now within the average range. Pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. They take on responsibilities in school and develop appropriate skills to prepare them for their future lives.

Good teaching and a well enriched curriculum successfully enable all pupils to make good progress and raise their standards. Well planned lessons ensure that work is well matched to the needs of every child. Teaching assistants provide good support. Most subjects are taught well across the curriculum, although information and communication technology (ICT) is not used as effectively as it might be to support pupils' learning because the teachers lack confidence in its use. Teachers set individual learning targets but many pupils do not know them. Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed, but this information is not used to help pupils know how well they are doing or how they can improve their work.

The excellent care and support given to pupils in the nurture group and to vulnerable pupils throughout the school is a distinctive feature of its provision. Indeed, the school welcomes and very successfully integrates a number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools.

The dedicated headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership for the school. Excellent inclusion ensures that there are equal opportunities for all pupils to fulfil their potential and challenging targets are set to help all pupils achieve well. Governors provide good support for the school and fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. Comprehensive self-evaluation processes enable leaders to identify the school's strengths and development priorities and these link well with the improvement plan, although some of the planned actions are not as clearly explained as they could be.

Parents are encouraged to take an active involvement in their children's learning and their responses overwhelmingly demonstrate their strong support for the school and its provision for their children. As one parent put it, 'Keep up the good work'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides children with a very good start to their education. Although children come into the Reception classes with exceptionally low skills, the excellent care, good teaching and exciting curriculum enable them to settle in quickly and make good progress. An outstanding lesson was seen during the inspection and the children thoroughly enjoy the stimulating variety of learning activities provided for them. Teachers and teaching assistants alike provide good encouragement and praise which help children to gain confidence and independence in their learning. All pupils are very well supported to enjoy and achieve and to develop a good range of social and learning skills.

The excellent curriculum links all areas of learning imaginatively so that children have great fun as they extend their skills. Indeed, even the youngest children talk enthusiastically about their learning, for example 'I like playing in the writing area'. Children's language skills are especially low when they start school and some staff work very hard to develop children's speaking and listening. However, this language support is not consistent across the two classes, leading to inconsistent progress in language skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by using assessment and marking more effectively so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve teachers' confidence in and their use of ICT across the range of subjects to support pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children come into the Reception class with exceptionally low attainment in the six areas of learning, especially in language, personal and social skills. Skilful teaching helps them to build their speaking and listening skills and they make good progress, so that by the time they join Year 1 they are well prepared for their learning. Pupils continue to make good progress through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 2 standards are moving closer to the national average, although they are still lower than average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and all other groups of vulnerable pupils make good progress and achieve very well. Girls outperform boys but the margin between the girls and the boys is similar to that found nationally. More able pupils are challenged and given good extension opportunities to help them fulfil their potential. Pupils of a variety of ethnic groups who join the school when they arrive in England are well supported to learn English quickly and they make exceptionally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy their time in school as demonstrated by their good behaviour and caring attitudes towards each other. The school has taken effective measures to improve attendance figures, which have risen and are now close to the national average. Pupils feel safe in school, and they say that bullying is not a problem. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle, which they demonstrate by making healthy food choices at break and lunchtimes. They also

understand the need to carry out activities safely, such as handling items of school equipment carefully.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with their understanding of other cultures benefiting from the range of different ethnic groups present in the school. Pupils readily take on responsibilities in the school, and they also take part in a number of fund-raising activities. Pupils are involved in a range of enjoyable events and activities in the local community, for example helping to take care of the environment. The school develops in its pupils both confidence and independence, which they happily demonstrate when sharing their ideas – and jokes – with visiting adults! The development of pupils' social skills and the standards they reach in literacy and numeracy prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is a strong feature throughout the school and this helps all pupils to make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects; as one pupil commented, 'I think all the teachers are very smart!' However, they are less confident with ICT. Lessons are generally well paced and enthusiastically taught so that pupils are well motivated and keen to do their best. Very good behaviour management maintains a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Good planning and organisation ensure that work is well matched to pupils' individual needs, with good support from teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For the most part, more able pupils are appropriately challenged, although on occasions this is not the case. Teachers use assessment well to help them plan next steps in learning but they do not let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A stimulating curriculum motivates pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress. History and geography provision has improved since the previous inspection. Good links are now being made between subjects, with a particular emphasis being placed on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Limited use is being made of ICT to support learning in other subjects, but the school is currently working to address this issue.

In the Foundation Stage, there is an excellent balance between independent learning and more directed tasks, and good use is made of the outdoor facilities. Pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully identified at an early stage and pupils are provided with an exciting range of tasks and activities. There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a wide range of enjoyable outings, visitors to the school and clubs that pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Outstanding pastoral care is at the heart of the school's work and parents speak highly of the provision the school makes for their children. There is a very strong focus on ensuring the well-being of every individual with, for example, staff taking outstanding care of children in the Sparklers nurture group and excellent arrangements to support pupils who are new to the school. Exceptional use is made of outside bodies in supporting pupils' care. Pupils say they are very confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious.

All staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance when doing physical education.

Teachers regularly mark pupils' work with encouraging comments, but rarely with advice about how to improve the work. Teachers set individual learning targets, but the benefit to pupils is somewhat reduced because they do not always have a clear understanding of what these are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Clear vision and strong teamwork enable the headteacher and leadership team to give clear direction, leading to school improvement. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection in a number of areas, such as raised attendance levels, writing skills, behaviour, attitudes to learning and greater parental involvement. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. Comprehensive self-evaluation processes involve all members of the school community and enable accurate identification of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement, which are targeted in the school's development plan. However, actions planned to address these improvement priorities are not always as clearly explained as they could be.

Good partnerships with other schools and organisations, such as the Excellence Cluster and the local Sure Start group, provide excellent opportunities to promote learners' well-being. Leaders at all levels set challenging targets, which are regularly reviewed and often exceeded so that new and higher targets have to be set. There are equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve their best and inclusion is an outstanding feature of the school. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school, providing good support and challenge and fulfilling their monitoring roles well.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
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?	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?	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	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Greenvale Infant School, Chatham, ME4 5UP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a good school that helps you to do well in your work and cares for you outstandingly well.

These are the things we especially like about your school:

- You are friendly and helpful and your behaviour is very good. Well done!
- You enjoy school and are keen to do your best.
- Yours is an extremely caring school where you look after each other very well.
- There are some excellent links with other groups that help your school to give you such great care and support.
- Everyone in the school helps new children to settle in happily and makes sure that all pupils are treated equally.
- Your teachers work very hard to provide enjoyable learning activities that help you make good progress and achieve well.
- Children in the Reception classes have a very good start to their school life.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school well and are working hard to make it even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

These are the things we think your school could do even better:

- Help you to reach higher levels in your reading, writing and mathematics by telling you how well you are doing now and how to improve your work.
- Make more use of computers in lessons to help your learning and improve your skills in all subjects.

We would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the good work!

With very best wishes

Jacquie Buttriss Lead inspector

16 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Greenvale Infant School, Chatham, ME4 5UP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a good school that helps you to do well in your work and cares for you outstandingly well.

These are the things we especially like about your school:

- You are friendly and helpful and your behaviour is very good. Well done!
- You enjoy school and are keen to do your best.
- Yours is an extremely caring school where you look after each other very well.
- There are some excellent links with other groups that help your school to give you such great care and support.
- Everyone in the school helps new children to settle in happily and makes sure that all pupils are treated equally.
- Your teachers work very hard to provide enjoyable learning activities that help you make good progress and achieve well.
- Children in the Reception classes have a very good start to their school life.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school well and are working hard to make it even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

These are the things we think your school could do even better:

- Help you to reach higher levels in your reading, writing and mathematics by telling you how well you are doing now and how to improve your work.
- Make more use of computers in lessons to help your learning and improve your skills in all subjects.

We would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the good work!

With very best wishes

Jacquie Buttriss
Lead inspector