

Great Chart Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118375
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312913
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Peirson-Webber
Headteacher	Isobel Duncalfe
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Hoxton Close Singleton Ashford TN23 5LB
Telephone number	01233 620040
Fax number	01233 661615

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an oversubscribed, larger than average sized primary school. Attainment on entry is in line with the national average. A lower than average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. While the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average this varies year on year with some year groups having above average proportions. In recent years the school has experienced substantial staff mobility.

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 outstanding features and provides an effective education for all its pupils. The vast majority of parents agree. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with all staff, really enjoy school and develop extremely well as individuals. They view their school as a place where 'everyone gets along' and greatly appreciate the fact that this is a school where every child, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, really does matter. Pastoral care is a strength of the school because everyone in the school really does go the extra mile to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. This is a key feature in the pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour and outstanding personal development.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress. This is because teaching is good and the good curriculum is well planned to support pupils' learning. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 they attain above average standards. Standards are strongest in English and science and the school is rightly working towards raising standards in mathematics to the same level. Teachers make effective use of their subject knowledge to provide an exciting and interesting curriculum to interest and motivate their pupils. As a result, the pupils are keen to learn and leave visitors in no doubt about how much they really do enjoy being at school. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing. They use this information well to set appropriate targets for pupils, give additional support when needed and to group their pupils by ability in English and mathematics. However, within mathematics, while lessons are generally well planned, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use assessment information even more effectively to ensure all pupils are challenged to achieve their best.

As a result of the strong leadership of the headteacher and her deputy, all leaders, including the governors, work very well together as a team. There is a real 'can do' attitude amongst the staff, which is a clear indicator that school leaders have successfully overcome the difficulties caused by the high staff turnover. Increasingly, other leaders are developing their skills in checking how well the school is doing to bring consistency to practice and ensure good quality of provision across the school. Effective leadership and management, coupled with the improvements made in the school since the previous inspection, demonstrate clearly that the school has a good capacity to make further progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provision is good and it is well led. Very good procedures enable pupils to settle quickly into the routines of school life and they behave extremely well and enjoy their learning. Children benefit from good teaching and an exciting array of activities in the vibrant classrooms and outdoor area. A good balance is struck between teacher-led and pupil-initiated activities. When children start they have the expected levels of skills and knowledge although the levels in aspects of communication skills, mathematical development and physical development are below average. They make good progress and most reach their targets by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring assessment is used effectively to plan work that provides enough challenge for all pupils.
- Ensure subject leaders play a more effective role in checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Across the school, pupils achieve well. Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception Year they have developed well to reach the levels expected for children of this age in all aspects of learning. Children's good start is built on in Years 1 and 2, and by the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average. Pupils' good progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6. In 2007, results were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. The school's monitoring showed pupils made good progress in mathematics from their starting points in the subject. The school sets challenging and demanding targets for pupils of all abilities, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good teaching combined with effective assessment and monitoring procedures are key factors in why these targets are met and in some instances exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are shown in their exemplary behaviour, attitudes to work and genuine concern for each other. From their first days in school, children are given an effective grounding in their personal development. They quickly form valuable relationships with friends and grown-ups, develop an understanding of right and wrong, and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Such values and attitudes fostered in the early years set the pattern for the rest of their time at Great Chart and beyond. They respond very well to their responsibilities, get on extremely well and help one another. Pupils make a strong contribution to school life, for example through the school council, where they raise important questions and ideas that the school responds to well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good and is another key factor in their excellent behaviour and positive relationships. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy and safe lifestyle. A good foundation for pupils' future economic well-being is provided by ensuring pupils achieve well in their basic skills as well as encouraging a range of fund raising activities and developing their skills as independent learners. Attendance is above average because of the school's thorough systems and effective work with parents and other agencies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers manage their classes well. A feature of good teaching is the interest it generates. For example, in Year 1 literacy lessons observed, teachers encouraged pupils to develop their understanding of a story through drama. Pupils found learning fun and had very positive attitudes continuing to act out the story independently during playtime. As

one boy said, 'Hooray – it's literacy – it's fun!!' Throughout the school, pupils work well and classroom chatter is all about what they are learning. Teachers expect their pupils to work well and explain the work clearly. Teaching assistants are skilled and effectively support pupils whether individually or in small groups, ensuring they make the same progress as others. Overall, teachers plan work effectively to meet all pupils' needs in classes drawn from mixed ability groups. This is because they generally use assessment and pupils' targets well to plan activities that challenge and help pupils to make good progress. However, in mathematics sets teachers sometimes miss opportunities to stretch all pupils. The quality of marking is good. Most teachers give constructive feedback that enables pupils to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The information gained from checking and evaluating teaching and pupils' progress is used successfully to make improvements to the curriculum. For instance, the school has reviewed the mathematics curriculum because it is not as well developed as in other subjects. It has added better resources to aid good learning in the subject. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It also celebrates effectively pupils' different cultural backgrounds, through events such as the highly successful 'Traveller Week'. There is additional, good provision for gifted and talented pupils. A well planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education gives pupils a clear understanding of how to keep safe and helps to promote pupils' outstanding personal development. A good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended add to pupils' considerable enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good with some outstanding aspects. This is a school where the individuality of all pupils is recognised and celebrated and where their pastoral care is given a very high priority. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are all secure. Pupils feel very safe and secure and are adamant that 'bullying is not a problem at our school'. Equality for all pupils is promoted very well. Very strong links with outside support agencies add to the effectiveness of the school's very good systems to support pupils' social and emotional needs. Academic guidance is good because it is firmly focused on how pupils can make good progress. The school recognises that it has to improve the consistency of guidance in mathematics. All pupils have a good awareness of their individual targets for improvement and are increasingly involved in self-assessing their own work, a significant improvement from the previous inspection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and the headteacher leads and manages the school well. She and other senior leaders play a pivotal role in fostering the strong sense of team spirit, which is focused on making the school even better. Key to this is the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation, which is both accurate and, more importantly, geared to improving the school's performance. The school's priorities for challenging targets, robust monitoring of pupils' performance, and for monitoring teaching and learning are well promoted by the effective

senior management team. The school has started to develop other leaders' skills in order to play a more active role in these priorities. However, they do not as yet carry out enough observations to ensure that the good quality of practice seen in some lessons is always consistent across the school. Governance is good because governors are supportive and play an effective role in questioning and evaluating the work and performance of the school.

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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?	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?	2
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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	2
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

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Chart Primary School, Ashford, TN23 5LB

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you love school and that the grown-ups are extremely kind and look after you really well. We think that they are particularly good at helping you to get on well with each other. They also encourage you to take part in the decisions that help make your school a better place.

We were pleased that there are plenty of things for you to take part in, such as the school council and all your clubs. Teaching is good and your teachers plan many exciting things for you, which mean you enjoy school so much. They help you to make good progress and reach above average results in your work. We think you are exceptionally polite to adults and to each other and behave extremely well around school. You make everyone in your school feel very welcome and really enjoy sharing with visitors just what you really like about your lessons and your school.

Great Chart School is a good school. It is well led and the adults know what needs to be done to make your school even better. To make your learning even better we have asked the adults at your school to:

- make sure your work is always hard enough in mathematics
- keep checking to make sure your lessons always help you to do well.

You can help by always using the advice teachers give you to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Marshall Lead inspector