

Greenacres Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123592
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314646
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Timothy Harding
Headteacher	Nicola Hey
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2004
School address	Rutland off York Road Harlescott Grange Shrewsbury SY1 3QG
Telephone number	01743 464570
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average-sized primary school has two headteachers who share the job of leading and managing the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion in receipt of free school meals. Both are very high in some year groups. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection but it is once again stable. The school has a Healthy Schools gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This well led, well managed school gives its pupils a good quality of education. The outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive contribute greatly to their good personal development and well-being. Attendance is now satisfactory and pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, fit and healthy. They enjoy school, appreciate the calm and orderly learning environment in which they achieve well, and they praise their teachers for being 'kind and helpful'. Parents, too, praise the school highly, particularly the dedication and commitment of the staff. The pupils' good progress starts in the Foundation Stage where staff focus successfully on developing children's confidence, independence and basic skills. That good progress continues throughout the school and pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages by the time they leave. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because their targets are very specific and they are supported well in their learning. A number of well considered initiatives are in place to foster pupils' enjoyment of reading. However, pupils do not fully understand how important reading is in helping them write and to learn in other subjects. The curriculum contains some imaginative links between subjects. These links build creatively on pupils' interests, simultaneously addressing their learning needs and giving them opportunities to study a range of topics in depth. Teachers' good planning ensures that the curriculum is taught well, usually in a structured, practical way, which pupils find exciting. However, in a small number of classes, there is an over-reliance on worksheets that require pupils to write very little or just record answers. Therefore, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to use and apply their writing skills, as in science, or to improve how they set out and write numbers in mathematics. The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate in almost all respects. However, it took a more modest view of its overall effectiveness than the inspection team because it is constantly striving to raise standards. The school has improved since the previous inspection and standards have risen. This is the outcome of the strong teamwork fostered and exemplified by the two headteachers, which has successfully minimised the impact of changes in staffing and other factors affecting pupils' learning. All of this gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they are taught well. However, few reach the standards expected for the end of Reception. Staff listen carefully to the children, get to know them and their families well, and assess and record their progress effectively. The curriculum is well planned and designed around the children's needs and interests. For example, a child's interest, sparked by the purchase of a compost bin at home, led to children growing sunflowers planted in compost they had made themselves. Sometimes, however, activities in literacy and numeracy are too adult-directed. In such lessons, children have too few opportunities to initiate their own ideas. The high priority given to personal, social and emotional development successfully ensures that children quickly settle into school routines. Many find it difficult to work together. However, staff gently and successfully persuade them to share, take turns, cooperate and look out for each other, skills they then carry with them throughout the school. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The co-ordinator, along with the headteacher, keeps a close check on the work of all staff, ensuring that agreed procedures are properly carried out to benefit the children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place more emphasis on improving reading and find ways to help pupils understand the value of it in relation to writing and learning in different subjects.
- Reduce the number of worksheets used in some classes to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills and improve their ability to set out and write numbers correctly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards in the Year 6 national tests rose from well below average in 2003 to broadly average levels in 2006. There was a further rise in mathematics in 2007, a testimony to the school's work in that subject, but standards fell in English. The year group did not perform in the national tests for English as well as their work indicated they might. Standards seen in the work of pupils currently in Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils make good progress in reading in school, too few read outside of school. Despite the school's best efforts, pupils do not always receive enough support at home to do this. As a result, they do not always learn quickly enough to read fluently or with understanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Additional support staff help them in this, supporting them well in class lessons as well as in small group work when relevant.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are attentive and polite. They behave well in lessons and around the school, although in the playground their play can be boisterous and they need reminders from staff and other pupils to calm down. They respond well to this and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, fit and healthy. They learn very successfully how to resolve conflict, including bullying. For example, 'agony aunts and uncles' mediate in disputes and older pupils help younger ones through being 'playground friends'. A great number of pupils take on these different roles and are therefore actively engaged with matters of right and wrong. As a result, they develop a good understanding of what goes to make a well ordered and supportive community and how they can contribute to it. The school and class councils give pupils a genuine voice in how the school is run, and a deeper understanding of their part in it. They also learn to respect each other and the diversity of different cultures. Initiatives such as arts week greatly contribute to this. Pupils enjoy school and very much appreciate what it does for them. They say that they like their teachers because 'they are really kind and helpful'. Pupils successfully develop the cooperative and collaborative skills they need for later life. Their attendance, much improved since the previous inspection, is satisfactory, as are their literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan effectively, ensuring that pupils know what and how they are to learn. The majority of lessons proceed at a fast pace. They are full of variety and involve learners in well

planned practical activities that foster enjoyment and make learning fun. Pupils say their lessons are one of the 'best things about the school' because of this. The relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Staff set good examples for pupils, teaching them how to be caring, courteous people who are interested in others. Behaviour is expertly managed so that all lessons are orderly and productive. Pupils' work is regularly marked with clear, encouraging comments that help them understand how to improve. Teachers brief the teaching assistants well and use them effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Within this overall very positive picture, however, a few of the more able pupils are very occasionally not sufficiently stretched by their work. In addition, a small number of teachers use too many worksheets. This sometimes limits opportunities for pupils to gain further practice in writing, or setting out and writing numbers accurately.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and matches the needs of pupils. This includes the good provision made in it for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more recent focus on improving provision for more able pupils. Events such as arts weeks enable pupils to think creatively. They are used extremely well to link and promote learning across all subjects and aspects of the curriculum, developing pupils' interests and aptitudes in concentrated ways. For example, work on a poem led to imaginative writing, artwork and ways of exploring reactions to and developing respect for the differences between people. An excellent range of visits and visitors, including, for example, artists, authors, story tellers and musicians, provide pupils with experiences of the wider world and contribute impressively to their learning. There is a consistent focus on developing basic skills in other subjects, with many initiatives in place to promote enjoyment of reading. There is scope, however, to emphasise further the importance of reading as a tool for learning across all subjects, something which pupils do not yet fully embrace or understand. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being, including their health and safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent support for pupils' physical and emotional health and well-being. Staff have a detailed knowledge of every pupil's background, including factors that affect their learning. Pupils flourish in a calm, well ordered learning environment. The school's very close links with external agencies are extremely effective in supporting all pupils, especially the most vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These, and initiatives such as the breakfast club, have also helped to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. The procedures for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, are very robust. Parents recognise and value the school's caring ethos and the support it gives them and their children. They variously describe teachers as 'very supportive', saying they 'listen to pupils' and parents' needs alike' and 'support pupils' confidence as well as their education'. The school does everything possible to involve parents in its work and in their children's learning, including running classes for them. These are proving successful for the small number of parents who take them up. Pupils are fully involved in the school's comprehensive assessment procedures. They know their targets and confidently assess their own and each other's work, supported by their teachers, against clear criteria, which they understand well. As a result, they have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very clear direction set by the two headteachers successfully focuses all staff on raising achievement through promoting pupils' learning, personal development and well-being. This includes some extremely hard work to help pupils and their parents understand and embrace the importance of education and of doing well. The school sets challenging targets which are based on its very thorough analysis of pupils' learning. It constantly and rigorously monitors and evaluates how well it is doing. The checks made on teaching and learning are robust. They ensure teachers are implementing agreed priorities and include clear guidance for staff on how to improve. Identified areas for development are followed up with well focused professional development. More recently, this has included work on improving writing and mathematics but not reading, which, consequently, slipped back this year. Leaders and managers successfully ensure that all forms of discrimination are sensitively and successfully tackled. To further their strong focus on equality of opportunity, they appointed additional support staff so that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities might make the same good progress as other pupils. Governors fulfil their duties satisfactorily. A small number do this well, regularly checking on the subjects or aspects for which they are responsible.

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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?	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	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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?	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	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

- 4 October 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Greenacres Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY1 3QG
Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You told us how much you enjoy school, that you find your teachers kind and helpful, and that learning is fun for you. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school and that the staff are dedicated to helping you do as well as you can. Here is a summary of the good things we found:
- Staff care very deeply for you. The excellent guidance and support they give you help you make good progress academically and in your personal lives.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves and others safe, fit and healthy.
- Your work as school and class councillors, agony aunts and uncles, and playground friends helps you in these respects and gives you a very good understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.
- You are taught well because teachers link subjects together in a way that makes learning exciting for you and lets you study things that are of real interest to you.
- The two headteachers who share the job of leading and managing your school keep a very close eye on how well you are doing. They make sure that your teachers quickly tackle any problems that might prevent you from enjoying school and learning well. In order to help you make even better progress, we have asked your headteachers to:
- Take another look at how they can help you to improve your reading skills and understand how important reading is in helping you to write better and to extend your learning in different subjects.
- Be really careful about the number of worksheets that some of you have to complete because they sometimes stop you being able to practise your writing skills or to set out and write numbers in mathematics. You can help by asking someone to help you read more at home and by always doing your very best to succeed at school. We hope very much that you will always enjoy learning as much as you do now and we wish you every success in the future.
Yours sincerely Mrs Doris Bell Lead inspector



4 October 2007

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Yours sincerely
Mrs Doris Bell
Lead inspector