

Greenmeadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126251
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315457
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Reynolds
Headteacher	Diane Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Pen Close Greenmeadow Swindon SN25 3LW
Telephone number	01793 521141
Fax number	01793 331850

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Greenmeadow Primary School is above average in size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Greenmeadow school is a good school. The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. This high quality care leads directly to the outstanding personal development of pupils who are growing into mature citizens of the future. A parent expressed the view of many when writing that, 'It is a privilege to send my child to Greenmeadow'. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, including children in the Foundation Stage, and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy going to a school where there is a welcoming and challenging ethos which encourages them to do their best at all times. The school environment, through the many colourful displays of pupils' work, promotes a powerful message of 'can do'. Pupils join in a host of exciting activities with great enthusiasm, but always in an atmosphere of calm, where caring for each other and being cared for is of the utmost importance. As a result, attendance is high, even though a significant number of pupils travel some distance to school. The school enjoys a high reputation with parents, who appreciate the outstanding way in which their children are looked after, and the good standards reached by pupils. The school provides excellent safeguarding for pupils and works very effectively with a wide range of support and social services.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Reception classes. The school has overcome some staffing difficulties in one class during the last year, and all children are now making good progress. This good achievement is continued in Years 1 to 6, where above average standards have been maintained for several years. School leaders are not complacent and are constantly striving for improvement in pupils' learning. As a result, writing has improved. Speaking and listening skills are a focus this year and are also improving. The achievement of more able pupils has also been successfully targeted. The school accepts that the opportunities for gifted and talented pupils should now be widened so that these pupils are challenged further.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, and occasionally outstanding. This success is partly due to the very rigorous and accurate monitoring of teaching by the senior managers, particularly the headteacher. Teachers have high expectations, are always challenging pupils, and try to make learning enjoyable. Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress is excellent, as is pupils' knowledge of their targets for improvement and of how well they are doing. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Those with English as an additional language move on at the same rate as others. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and make a good contribution to the learning and care of pupils. Resources for learning are mostly good, with two exceptions. In the Foundation Stage, the outdoor area is small and does not offer enough opportunities for learning and play activities. Although standards are good in information and communication technology (ICT), the suite where most teaching takes place is cramped, stuffy and an uncomfortable environment for learning.

The leadership and management of the school are good and there is an outstanding focus on improving the school. Senior managers share the headteacher's very clear vision for constantly moving the school forward. The headteacher's minute attention to detail ensures that management decisions are always based on careful planning and understanding of priorities. Many improvements since the last inspection, such as the part taken in management by subject leaders, are due to good planning and action by senior managers. Senior leaders are being helped very positively by a governing body which is supportive, evaluative and clear on school priorities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children start school with skills broadly at the level expected for their age, although there is a wide spread of individual attainment on entry. Since the last inspection, the school has taken effective action to improve children's progress in the Reception classes. In the current year, staffing difficulties in one class caused some slowing of progress. Children are now achieving much better as a result of good support by the school management. Many children are reaching above average standards in all areas of learning by the time they go into Year 1. Teachers have been particularly successful in improving the personal development and attitudes of some boys who at first found it difficult to settle. All children now show great enthusiasm for learning, such as placing objects on a treasure map or identifying seaside objects with a teaching assistant. A feature of the classrooms is the very stimulating children's artwork, which promotes an exciting and warm environment. However, the outside area is rather small and cramped and offers only very limited opportunities for learning and play activities. Teachers plan well, have very good relationships with their children, and work effectively with sensitive and experienced teaching assistants.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage, to enable children to have more opportunities in their learning and play activities.
- Investigate and implement strategies to increase challenging learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.
- Investigate ways in which the ICT suite can be made more accessible and comfortable for the learning of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and progress is good throughout the school for all groups of pupils. In the Reception classes, children develop confidence and independence, and, by the time they start in Year 1, the skills of most of them are above average in all areas of learning. In Key Stage 1, standards have been consistently above average in writing, reading and mathematics for several years. This continues to be the case in Year 1, although standards look slightly lower in Year 2 this year. High standards have been maintained because of very effective monitoring and assessment of the progress of each pupil, and clear focus on learning priorities. This is exemplified by the good progress being made in speaking and listening this year. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been consistently above average in English, science and mathematics for the last four years, other than a dip in English in 2006. Swift remedial action was taken, resulting in significant improvement, especially in the numbers of pupils reaching higher levels. Standards in Year 6 at present are above average, although not so many pupils are reaching levels well above average. Targets become more challenging every year and there are clear signs that pupils are successfully reaching them. Standards in ICT are higher than average, which is highly commendable in view of the quality of the main teaching area for the subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The clear focus on caring for others and taking responsibility, including for the quality of their learning, means pupils develop into well-rounded individuals. They enjoy the challenges of competing for behaviour and attendance prizes, helping to make attendance consistently above average and behaviour exemplary. Their thought and concern for the safety of others is clear to see throughout the school and they are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. The moral ethos of the school is very evident in assemblies, where different cultures and beliefs are celebrated regularly. Artists and performers share their knowledge with pupils whose learning, as a result, is greatly enriched. Students from a local college are helping pupils to enjoy street jazz dance, and the school regularly reverberates to the sound of young samba drummers. Pupils take part in many sports activities and walking and cycling to school are actively encouraged, helping strengthen pupils' excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles. The school regularly gains the Healthy Schools award. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities in the school community, for example, developing their own golden rules and taking on the roles of 'peer mediators' who support others. Their good standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT, together with opportunities to develop economic awareness such as through the Young Enterprise programme, give pupils an excellent grounding in the skills needed in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some areas of outstanding practice. Teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly, ensuring that pupils of all abilities have the chance to achieve well. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils, as seen in an ICT lesson in Year 6 when pupils were preparing presentations including sound and visual images. Levels of challenge are well matched to individual needs. Teachers use assessment well and pupils are clear about their individual targets for each lesson. Older pupils carry out personal research and self-evaluation to promote their learning. There is a clear focus on literacy and numeracy across lessons in all subjects, such as pupils learning to use specialist science vocabulary confidently. The school monitors its teachers rigorously and encourages the sharing of good practice. Teachers occasionally dominate lessons, especially in their introductions, and pupils spend too long listening, when they are eager to get on with learning activities, as one boy said, 'which we don't have time to finish'. Resources are effectively used, particularly whiteboards, and teachers are often highly imaginative in the ways they build excitement into their lessons. Classrooms are beautifully decorated with the results of art lessons, all making a lively and colourful environment for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a creative and stimulating curriculum which appeals to all learners. It is currently being reshaped into cross-curricular learning units, which are well planned and supported by discrete subject units to ensure good provision for skills progression across all subjects. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and particularly value a wide range of clubs, such as gymnastics and dance, which are well attended. There is also good provision for physical education, art

and French. The school has gained both the Activemark and Artsmark awards in recognition of its good provision in art and sporting activities. The curriculum is well suited for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It provides some good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. However, the school realises that there is considerable potential to develop initiatives which can give its most capable pupils greater challenge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are very appreciative of the exceptionally caring and supportive pastoral provision. Teachers know pupils very well and are quick to help when needed. The deployment and high quality of support staff helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities flourish and fully participate in school life. The school has excellent partnerships with external specialist agencies, social services and the neighbouring high school. Academic guidance is very effective because teachers make excellent use of assessment and other information to track and identify pupils' learning needs. Guidance through rigorous processes of setting targets and the use of 'learning lighthouses' to help support progress is exemplary and highly effective in improving learning. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how they are doing and what they could do better, and are skilled in evaluating their own work and that of others. Marking by teachers is helpful and, in most cases, has a good balance of praise and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides quiet, calm and exceptionally effective leadership, which sets the tone for the widely held ambition of staff and governors for high quality education and care for all pupils. Her meticulous attention to detail, and constant demand for evidence, ensures that the management team produces effective development plans for improvement, which are followed through to meet success criteria. An example is the way in which subject leaders have been guided towards monitoring their subjects much more effectively than in the past. The school has used challenging targets to maintain above average standards over time, and is now setting out to raise these a notch in order that all pupils reach their highest potential. The school is well resourced overall, but the management is not content with keeping a 'status quo'. There is constant evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and identification of what needs to be better. The school rightly recognises that a more spacious and comfortable ICT suite is needed in order to facilitate better learning. The governors, some of whom are recent appointments, are far seeing, and are carefully planning the future direction of the school. This is helped by their good knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and evaluative, although sometimes modest in its judgements where evidence of success is overwhelmingly positive.

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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?	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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

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	1
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

21 June 2008

Inspection of Greenmeadow Primary School, Swindon, SN25 3LW

Dear Pupils,

Thank you all for welcoming us so politely to your school last week. We really enjoyed being with you because you are so enthusiastic about your learning and take such good care of all your friends. We have never seen so many children opening doors for each other! We loved your samba drumming, your art work all over the school, and talking to some of you in Year 5 in French. So many of you told us how much you enjoyed school, and you all have such a good knowledge about how you are doing. Here are some of the other things we found out about your school:

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- You are well taught, make good progress and reach above average standards.
- Your behaviour is excellent, and all of you are very keen to learn, and to improve your work. You are very well cared for, and you feel safe and happy in school.
- All the awards your school has won show us how healthy you are, which is helped by the sport you have in school and in clubs.
- Both you and your parents are very proud of the school.
- The headteacher is doing a very good job in managing the school and is given strong support by all other school leaders. They are always asking, 'What can we do to make the school even better?' Well, we have tried to help by telling them three things we think they can do:
 - The outdoor area outside the Reception classes could be made bigger, and shadier, so that the youngest of you can learn and play outside more often.
 - The ICT suite is small, gets very hot and is not a very comfortable place for you to learn in. We have suggested that this room could be improved for you.
 - Although some of you reach very high standards in your work, we found that the school can help a small number of you with special gifts and talents to do even better.

Keep working hard and enjoying your learning. Good luck with the Key Stage 2 play.

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite Lead Inspector