

Greasby Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105026
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324142
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Creed
Headteacher	Mr A Martin
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
School address	Mill Lane Greasby Wirral Merseyside CH49 3AR
Telephone number	0151 677 1837
Fax number	0151 677 1748

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a residential area which is socially and economically advantaged. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British, with a small number from other heritages. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than is found in most schools. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Silver Eco Award. Extended day care is provided on the school site by the 'Windmills' before and after school and holiday club. These facilities for care were not inspected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils work and play together very harmoniously and achieve extremely well in this outstanding school. An ethos of self-respect and care for others is central to the school's happy and effective learning community and pupils thrive in this supportive environment. They benefit greatly from school leaders' evaluative and creative approach to all aspects of provision. This is evidenced in pupils' excellent progress and in the high standards they consistently reach academically and in their personal and social development.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high. They have been like this for the past six years. High quality support and well managed provision ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve very well even from their above average levels on entry to the school. The school tracks the rate of pupils' progress across subject areas and year groups carefully to ensure its consistency; expectations are very high and areas for improvement are identified and addressed quickly and effectively. The quality of teaching is outstanding and the school's organisational strategies are very effective. For example, pupils are grouped by ability in English and mathematics lessons and this helps teachers to target work very closely to the needs of individuals.

Pupils are increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning and are being enabled to assess for themselves how well they are doing. Teachers are constantly evaluating the school's excellent curriculum and seeking out ways to make it even more vibrant and stimulating for the pupils, and pupils say that lessons are interesting and learning is fun in their school. During the last school year, teachers began to link subjects together in a theme-based approach. The school's evaluations show that this has had a very positive impact on achievement, including helping to raise the overall quality of pupils' writing from good to excellent. This initiative is still at an early stage and it is more developed in some subjects and year groups than in others. Pupils develop excellent social skills and sound moral values in this caring school. Their spiritual development is nurtured very well through regular opportunities for reflection in assemblies, the curriculum and discussion time. They collaborate very well when working in groups or with a partner in lessons. Plenty of opportunities are provided to support their cultural development and prepare them for life in a multicultural society. They are active fund-raisers for local charities and are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others. A strong focus on healthy living, ecological awareness and community involvement ensures that pupils are confident, sociable citizens, well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.

Excellent pastoral care enables pupils to feel happy and secure in school. Parents have great confidence in the school. 'We feel our children are valued and encouraged', and, 'My children are so eager to tell me about their wonderful day and what they've been learning', were typical comments, demonstrating the value parents place on all that the school provides.

The headteacher sets an ambitious agenda for excellence and the school community shares the vision and works very well together towards its achievement. Everyone on the staff team plays a part, alongside proactive and well informed governors in evaluating the quality of provision. Whole-school targets are challenging. Action plans are strategic and creative. These factors combine to give the school excellent capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the development of innovative curriculum design across the subjects and year groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils consistently reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and provisional results for 2008 confirm that the high standards of previous years were sustained once again. Pupils in all year groups made excellent progress during the last school year. The school identified that progress in writing, although good, was slower than progress in the other subjects and writing became a whole-school priority area for improvement. Developments have been made in the curriculum and teaching which are addressing this issue very successfully and work in pupils' books shows that progress has accelerated and that standards and achievement in writing are very high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve extremely well in this inclusive school as a result of the excellent provision made for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is seen in their excellent behaviour and attendance. The school's emphasis on praise and valuing each individual ensure that pupils grow in self-esteem and form good quality relationships with staff and with each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as school councillors or as play leaders. They collaborate well in groups and when working with partners in lessons. These factors, together with their excellent basic skills in English and mathematics, prepare them extremely well for the future. They have excellent awareness of issues of personal safety and healthy lifestyles. They are supported extremely well by the school's excellent induction arrangements for new pupils and by a well designed programme, which prepares them for their transition to secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding and this underpins the excellent progress pupils make. Learning is planned extremely well to meet the range of pupils' needs. Lessons are absorbing making pupils enthusiastic learners who speak confidently and with obvious interest and enjoyment about their work. The learning environment is bright and welcoming. Relationships in the well managed classrooms are warm and happy, enabling pupils to feel secure and ready to learn. Teaching assistants work in very close partnership with the class teachers, making an excellent contribution to learning support for all of the pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment is carried out systematically and pupils' progress is tracked carefully. This enables the school to identify and address areas of underachievement very promptly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a vibrant and innovative curriculum, which engages pupils' interests very successfully and contributes extremely well to their personal and academic development. Excellent provision is made for developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and

information and communication technology. Opportunities are increasingly being taken to integrate aspects of the teaching of other subjects. This approach to the curriculum is planned in great detail, with a sharp focus on supporting the development of a wide range of skills across the subject areas. Pupils find great interest and enjoyment in being able to undertake in-depth study of topics and themes, such as the Victorian age. This is because they are presented very creatively and because they provide rich opportunities for them to undertake research and investigation, thereby significantly increasing their knowledge and understanding of each topic. Opportunities have also been built in for pupils to practise and extend their writing skills and this has contributed well to the success of the school's drive for excellence in writing. The school keeps its curriculum under review, with careful evaluations of how it is organised and presented and its impact on the development of pupils' subject skills. Plans are in place to increase the range of themed units of study for all the year groups, but there has not been time for them to be put into action. Further enrichment is provided by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and by curriculum-related visits, including residential trips, and visitors to school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well cared for and receive great encouragement to achieve as well as possible in all aspects of their education. They are confident that adults are readily on hand to help with any problems that may arise and they benefit greatly from learning to share and discuss issues that are important to them in class discussions. Pupils who have additional learning needs are supported very well and the school liaises effectively with external agencies to promote their progress and well-being. Pupils are given excellent guidance on how to improve their work through the consistent use of constructive marking and they are helped to assess their own progress towards individual learning targets. The school complies fully with statutory requirements for pupil safeguarding and child protection. Health and safety requirements are met and pupils' awareness of these and ecological issues is promoted extremely well. Partnerships with parents are developed very well through regular communications and some well designed initiatives, such as the very well attended curriculum workshops; to support parental involvement in their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's clear vision for taking the school forward is shared wholeheartedly by the governors and by staff at all levels. High standards have been sustained over time because systems for evaluating how well the school is doing are firmly embedded. Subject leaders assist well in ensuring the high quality of all areas of the school's operations. Whole-school targets are set which are challenging and aspirational; the school's leaders are skilled in identifying and planning appropriate actions to achieve them. The strong team ethos enables staff to share and develop their skills and to be confident curriculum innovators. A supportive and proactive governing body is able to hold the school to account and act as its critical friend. The school addresses the community cohesion agenda well, but has not yet developed formal systems to evaluate the success of this aspect of its provision.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and the conversations we had with you. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what we found.

- You are being given an outstanding education at Greasby. I think you have a great school and I know you think so too.
- You work hard and you reach very high standards. Well done. Keep it up and carry on enjoying learning!
- You are taught extremely well. The staff make your lessons very interesting and they are really good at helping you to understand how to reach your targets.
- I think you have a wonderful curriculum at Greasby. I was especially impressed by your topic work and the work you do on special days like the Victorian day in Year 5. This work is helping you to develop so many excellent skills and I could see what fun you were having in your investigations and role-play activities.
- The school is very well led and the headteacher and the staff are always on the lookout for ways to make it even better.
- The adults in school look after you and care for you extremely well.

I've asked the headteacher and the staff to keep on developing your exciting and interesting curriculum in all the year groups in school.

With my very best wishes for the future