

Greenleys First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 110345 |
| Local Authority | Milton Keynes |
| Inspection number | 325135 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth McFarlane |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 139 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Janet Irons |
| Headteacher | Mrs Susan Harrington |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 September 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Ardwell Lane Greenleys MK12 6AT |
| Telephone number | 01908 314698 |
| Fax number | 01908 314698 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school has a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. A higher proportion of pupils than average are new to learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Few pupils have statements of educational needs, but a higher proportion than usual have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, social or emotional difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage has places for 60 children aged 4-5 in two Reception classes. The school offers a breakfast club managed by the governing body. It also provides transport to take its pupils to after-school care that is offered in the area by other providers, which was not part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils thrive because partnerships with parents and outside agencies are highly effective in promoting their well-being. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed their appreciation of the school. 'The school works together with parents to take good care of pupils' is typical of their comments.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. Throughout the school, they make good progress from their starting points, which are often well below those typical for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 2, they reach standards in reading and mathematics that are broadly average. In writing, standards are above average. Reasons for the improvement in standards since the last inspection include good management initiatives to improve the teaching and learning of letters and sounds, sharpened tracking of pupils' progress, and careful nurture. Pupils achieve well, whatever their background or ability.

Pupils' personal skills develop well. They enjoy school and develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They have a good understanding of their diverse community and enjoy celebrating different cultural festivals. Attendance is average. Pupils have a good understanding of why they should live healthy lifestyles. They say they feel safe in school, and are sure that if others were unkind to them, an adult would come to their aid. The school council feels that their views are listened to and that they help make decisions for the school, such as having 'friendship benches' in the playground. Pupils leave the school, having made good progress in their basic skills, well prepared for junior school.

The school has recently undertaken a comprehensive review, which has improved the curriculum it offers. This good programme makes learning more meaningful because it links subjects and skills better. Pupils are inspired by the particularly good provision for sports, for which the school recently won a local authority award. Pupils enjoy the good range of enrichment activities. Care, guidance and support are good. The academic guidance systems are well developed. Pupils know and understand their targets and how to reach them. This is a key reason that standards have improved steadily since the last inspection. Strong support is provided for vulnerable pupils and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching is mostly good but, just occasionally, expectation is not high enough. Sometimes, during lessons, teachers focus on whether activities have been completed rather than on whether pupils understand what they are learning. In these cases, progress slows.

Leadership and management are good. Recent changes have been handled well. The new headteacher, an internal appointment who still acts as special educational needs coordinator, shares her vision well. As a result, other managers, although new to their roles, understand what they need to do. They are quick to identify and tackle weaknesses, and choose good supportive remedies. Their strength so far has been the successful focus on raising standards. Governance is satisfactory. Work on community cohesion in its wider United Kingdom and global context, and its impact, are at an early stage. The school knows itself well and has accurately identified the right priorities. The rising standards, together with the strong teamwork evident, show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception classes soon settle, because induction procedures are thorough and caring as a result of good leadership and management. Children make good progress and achieve well, whatever their background or ability. Most reach average standards from their low starting points. This is an improvement on previous years. Staff keep a very close eye on individual children's progress through good ongoing observations. As a result, they meet children's individual needs well. A good balance is struck between adult-led activities and those that children undertake independently, in the classroom and the outside area. Activities are planned which fully engage the children. The good teaching stimulates curiosity and enables all to participate fully. A successful emphasis on building confidence and developing good personal and social skills provides good preparation for future learning. A buzz of enthusiasm surrounded the 'castle' as Cinderella and her Prince, suitably attired, prepared their 'wedding breakfast' during the inspection. Behaviour is managed well, and relationships are calm and warm. As a result, there is a high level of trust between children and adults, and children are very at ease with those around them. This feeling of being safe and healthy helps them to enjoy their day. Procedures to promote children's welfare work well. Parents are particularly supportive, and enjoy strong partnerships with the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress by ensuring that expectation is consistently high, and that teachers are consistently focused on pupils' understanding of what is intended to be learned.
- Strengthen community cohesion by assessing the impact of pupils' understanding of their own community in the national and international context, to help prepare them for the world in which they will live.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress during their time in the school and they achieve well. Standards are broadly average. In 2008, pupils entered from Reception with broadly average standards, an improvement on earlier years. Standards in Year 2 were broadly average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing, which shows the impact of recent successful strategies to improve literacy since the last inspection. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils, did much better than their groups nationally. Those speaking English as an additional language, those who find learning difficult, and vulnerable pupils, also made better progress than their national counterparts. This is because a good academic guidance system, introduced last year, identifies and deals with learning needs, and target sharing is helping pupils understand how to improve. There is no significant difference in the relative attainment of any group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Careful attention by all adults in the school community to pupils' well-being assists pupils to develop their good personal skills and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Attendance is average. Pupils come into school enthusiastic about the day ahead and say they feel safe. 'My child is happy and confident and thoroughly enjoying his school experience,' a

parent commented. Behaviour is usually good in and around the school. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well, so that pupils understand why they need to keep fit. 'We need our five-a-day to keep healthy,' as one, typically, said. They engage in a good range of physical and sporting activities. Pupils show good understanding of school procedures and are considerate of each other and of adults. They learn how to conduct themselves sensibly, and this is reinforced by a good understanding of right from wrong. Those who take on tasks and responsibilities as school councillors make a good contribution to the school community. Their good progress in the acquisition of basic skills prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most pupils make good progress in their learning because the teaching is good. The best lessons are interesting and enjoyable because they proceed with good pace, and teachers encourage discussion and cooperation. Interactive whiteboards are used well to provide a variety of stimulating resources which enhance learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' behaviour is well managed, and the positive atmosphere encourages learning. Good end-of-lesson discussion enables pupils to reflect on their experiences of their different tasks. However, in a few lessons, expectation is not high enough, and too much emphasis is placed on activities completed rather than what has been learned. In these lessons, progress slows. The marking of pupils' work is good. In the best lessons, clear verbal or written feedback gives pupils specific guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A key feature of the good curriculum is the daily 'letters and sounds' session for the whole school, in which pupils are taught in ability groups. This has been instrumental in raising writing standards in 2008. An extensive review of the broader curriculum has resulted in a good programme which has recently been put in place. This is more meaningful and interesting for pupils than previously, and helps them to make links between learning in different subjects. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, and provides especially well for those who are vulnerable or find learning difficult. The comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education deals well with learners' social and emotional needs. Regular visits and visitors enrich learning, and pupils enjoy the good range of extra clubs and activities. The sports clubs, in particular, make a considerable contribution to pupils' physical development and progress. Assemblies provide a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The emphasis on good academic guidance and nurture reaps measurable benefits in terms of pupils' personal development and improved academic progress. The staff have worked successfully to develop more effective systems to check whether pupils are meeting the targets set for their progress. These good systems ensure that academic support for groups and individuals meets their needs. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language, vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are very carefully

supported in their learning. Good links with outside agencies ensure that family liaison plays a strong part in helping pupils to gain from their time here. All required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This friendly and welcoming school owes much to the teamwork of its staff, under the clear direction of the headteacher. She is focused on developing and encouraging staff skills, while introducing effective measures to improve standards further. The impact of senior leaders is especially apparent in the good levels of care and the improvement in academic guidance since the last inspection. Governance is satisfactory, and is usefully developing stronger links with key aspects of the school. Good use of challenging targets has led to sustained gains in achievement, standards, teaching and learning. Leaders ensure that all pupils are fully and equally included in all that the school offers. They promote strong links with the local community and know its profile very well. They are beginning to reach out to other communities in the national and global context, for instance through 'language of the month' and geographical studies of contrasting national and global communities. However, evaluating the impact of this is at an early stage. The school improvement plan is a good, clearly laid out document in which all staff are involved. The school knows itself well. It runs smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Almost all parents voice their support for the school and its management. The good progress made since the last inspection shows good capacity to make further improvements.

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

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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

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| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| 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 |

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

13 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenleys First School, Greenleys, MK12 6AT

I know you will remember that I recently visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you all. This letter is to thank you for making me feel so welcome and to tell you what I found out about your school.

One of the things the school is good at doing is helping you to grow into friendly, well-behaved and enthusiastic learners. You told me how much you like school, and how well all the adults look after you and help you to learn. Your parents agree, and I saw that this was true on my visit.

You work hard, and the staff work equally hard to make your lessons interesting. What a lot of lively activities you take part in! No wonder you work hard at them and make good progress so as to be ready for your next school. In Reception, I was surprised to meet Cinderella and Prince Charming making their Wedding Breakfast!

You all have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of how to keep yourselves safe and fit. I saw lots of examples of how well you care for one another and take on responsibilities in and around the school. Those of you who spend time in the nurture group receive really good support. Because of this, and everyone trying hard, your work has improved. When you move into the junior school, your work is about the same standard now as the work of most other children in the country.

To help you to make even better progress, I have asked the school to help you understand exactly what you are learning and to give some of you some harder work, so that you make as much progress as you can.

I have also asked your school to help you look at the ways in which Greenleys is the same or different from other places in the world. This will help you to understand the world you will be living in when you grow up.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector