

Greenleys Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110367
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	325138
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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)	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Myra Hall
Headteacher	Miss Caroline Bond
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
School address	Off Marron Lane Greenleys Milton Keynes MK12 5DE
Telephone number	01908 312551
Fax number	01908 312884

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, with around a third from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is very much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly moderate learning difficulties, is also very much higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The school has achieved the Artsmark, Healthy School Award and the Football Association Charter Mark. The school has been subject to reorganisation and is being led by a new headteacher who has been in post for just over a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. It has a number of strengths, mostly relating to pupils' personal development and care, which are of good quality. The overwhelming majority of parents agree and believe that every child is valued and made to feel special. One parent wrote, 'I feel that since my son started at this school he has come on very well, kept up his excellent work and been taught well'.

Standards are improving, even though they are still well below average in writing, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are rapidly improving and are satisfactory. Almost all groups of pupils make the progress expected of them, so that achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly to do with reading and writing, are making good progress and achieving well.

The school has been through a period of great uncertainty as a result of the reorganisation of schooling in Milton Keynes. Since her appointment, the new headteacher has pursued an agenda to eradicate underachievement and rebuild pupils' self-esteem. This has been successful and can be seen in the satisfactory or better progress now being made by almost all pupils. This is because the teachers are using the good systems to track pupils' performance so that they can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. The school has also provided effective programmes to help pupils who have emotional and social difficulties so that they play a full and active part in school life. This too, has helped to create a calm and orderly atmosphere where pupils feel valued and want to learn.

A group of older pupils confirmed the improving picture when talking about their work. They were convinced that the school had improved and that lessons were now much more challenging. They also felt they had gained confidence in their ability to make a difference to their own and others' lives. For example, one older girl has carried out some action research in cooperation with the Children Research Centre at the Open University to gauge children's views of living with a thyroid disorder. She thought it wasn't fair that adults had support groups and children didn't. The findings of the study were shared with health professionals and the British Thyroid Foundation who asked her to become editor of a Children's Corner in the Association's national magazine.

The proportion of good teaching is rapidly increasing but is not yet sufficiently widespread to fully overcome a legacy of underachievement. Teachers are increasingly skilled in planning activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils within their classes. Older pupils say they make the best progress when they are fully involved in the activities and have opportunities to try out new ways of working. 'Some teachers are good at trusting you to get on with your work' and, 'they also help you to learn from your mistakes'. Despite these improvements, there are still too many occasions when teachers fail to capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to accelerate their rate of progress.

The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their good personal development. Planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are being adapted to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, it does not yet ensure there are enough opportunities in some lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to sustain rapid progress. The use of information and communication

technology is developing well and being used increasingly to support learning across the curriculum.

Pupils are well cared for, feel safe and enjoy school. They are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. There are good systems to track their performance so that teachers can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in setting personal targets and evaluating their work. This is developing well but is not yet firmly embedded across all classes. This means that some pupils are not as aware of the implications of what they must do to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher is providing clear direction for the work of the school and has maintained a strong sense of community and teamwork among all adults. Every child, whatever their ability or needs, is welcomed and included in the school's activities. Subject coordinators are systematically evaluating the quality of teaching and learning but their focus could be sharper. This would ensure greater consistency in the quality of learning across classes and raise achievement further. School self-evaluation, now undertaken by staff at all levels, results in actions that are accelerating achievement levels. This confirms the school's good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly higher attainers, and further raise standards.
- Ensure that subject coordinators use the outcomes of monitoring activities more sharply to ensure that the quality of learning is consistently good across all classes.
- Build on the good start at using target setting to involve all pupils more in assessing their work so they have a clear understanding of the next steps for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science but achievement is satisfactory from low starting points. The vast majority of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, now make the expected progress or better. The school has been through a period of considerable change with cohorts of pupils starting or leaving at other than the usual time. The resulting picture of the progress made by different groups is very complex because of this. Standards are rising by age 11, even though they remain low. The most recent tracking information for pupils in the current Year 6 shows they are making expected or better progress and are meeting their challenging targets. This is due to the impact of the rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress, and prompt interventions when they fall behind. Those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly to do with reading and writing, are making good progress and achieving well. This occurs because they receive good quality help. The schools' monitoring data also confirm that younger pupils who started at the beginning of Year 3 are making good progress from their starting points in school and are attaining higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions, are good because the school has put considerable efforts into building a caring and respectful community. Pupils treat each other with respect, willingly accept responsibility and behave well. They show consideration and respect for each other whatever their backgrounds or cultures. Pupils are well aware of the importance of staying safe, eating healthily and taking regular exercise. This has been recognised through the award of the Football Association Charter Mark and Healthy School status. Pupils make a good contribution to their community, participating in local events, involving themselves in charity fundraising, and decision-making through the school council and the Eco group. Attendance is good. The breakfast club offers a good start to the day and makes a significant contribution to sustaining good levels of attendance and punctuality. Recent improvements in pupils' progress and their ability to work together cooperatively mean they now leave the school as confident individuals and satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A significant proportion of good teaching was seen during the inspection. Its impact was seen in the good learning and the interest and enjoyment shown by the pupils in these lessons. Teaching is good when the learning activities cater well for the differing needs of learners. For example, older pupils were learning about the effect exercise has on their bodies. They jogged on the spot for two minutes and then carefully measured changes to their breathing, heart and pulse rate. Higher-attaining children were challenged to find out the effect of exercise on animals. One group, for example, decided to find out if cats and dogs sweat. They eagerly rose to this challenge and used the internet proficiently to find out more information. However, this is not consistent across the school. Some teachers still fail to exploit fully the pupils' abilities at working independently or their skills at exploring ideas for themselves. This slows the rate of progress because pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are not sufficiently engaged in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and their enjoyment of school. The curriculum is being adapted to make it challenging, relevant and exciting by linking subjects such as reading and writing together thematically to increase the pupils' enjoyment of their learning. However, teachers recognise that more remains to be done. The level of enrichment is strong, with many clubs for pupils to enjoy, and a host of visits and visitors. Pupils' cultural development has been enhanced, for example, by visits from the Osagyefu Ghanaian Dance Troupe and their environmental awareness has been raised through links with the Milton Keynes Eco Park. Opportunities for the creative arts have been increased. This has been recognised through the award of the Artsmark Silver Award. Despite these strengths, planning is not yet consistently rigorous enough in providing challenge for pupils, particularly the higher attainers, which results in some uneven progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are in place and well understood, particularly in regard to child protection, risk assessment and health and safety. Pupils trust their teachers and know they can approach adults in the school to help solve problems. They say they feel safe from bullying and know that adults will quickly deal with any worries or concerns. Attendance is above average and is the result of a rigorous approach to following up any unauthorised absences. The performance of pupils is tracked carefully and is helping to raise standards and achievement further. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in setting personal targets and evaluating their work. This is developing well but is not yet firmly embedded across all classes. High-quality provision for those who have social and emotional difficulties enables these pupils to play a full and active part in school life.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and leadership team are working with determination to accelerate pupils' achievement. The actions they have taken are effective and checks carried out by the school show that pupils are now achieving the challenging targets set for them. Leaders and managers are using challenging targets well to raise standards and are achieving them. Self-evaluation, which now involves staff at all levels, provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement identified by the school are both relevant and manageable. Subject coordinators are becoming more effective at evaluating the school's performance in partnership with senior managers. However, the focus for their activities could be sharper, for example by concentrating on specific groups or age groups. This will help ensure greater consistency across the school in order to raise achievement further. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. The school has identified ways for pupils to develop knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way they do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future. However, it has yet to evaluate fully the impact of its actions on the community beyond the school itself. Governance is satisfactory overall. The recent work of the governors shows they are becoming more effective at holding the school to account for its performance. They manage the breakfast club very well.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

08 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenleys Junior School, Milton Keynes, MK12 5DE

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much. We judged that you go to a satisfactory and improving school. Here is a list of some of the things we most liked.

- Your headteacher and the teachers are all working well together to make your school even better than it is.
- You listen carefully to what your teachers say and behave and attend well.
- Your work is improving and you are now making better progress in classes.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after and are helping you to improve your work.
- The school council and Eco group represent your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think there are three things to do next.

- We are asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities during lessons to learn independently and explore your own ideas.
- There are many good lessons and we are asking your teachers to try to improve on this and make all of your lessons good or better. This will help all of you make even better progress.
- We have also asked your teachers to find out more about the different ways they could check how well you are learning during lessons. This will help them to make your work even better than it is.

We know that you will continue to work hard and we are sure that you will help your teachers and new headteacher to make your school even better. We hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours faithfully

John Earish

Lead Inspector