

Great Sampford Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114970
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326101
Inspection date	23 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	95
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	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Shirley Gant
Headteacher	Mr Ian Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Finchingfield Road Great Sampford Saffron Walden Essex CB10 2RL

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	23 October 2008
Inspection number	326101

Telephone number
Fax number

01799 586280
01799 586261

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by pupils from entering Reception to leaving Year 6; changes in standards from year to year; the impact of leadership and management; and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, parental questionnaire returns, performance data, the school's self-evaluation and other school documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. It lies in rural west Essex and serves the village of Great Sampford and its surrounding area. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. They are relatively advantaged economically, but enter the school's EYFS with broadly average attainment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has many outstanding features and some areas requiring development. It enables pupils to make good academic progress and excellent personal development. The school is at the heart of village life and contributes exceptionally well to the local community.

From starting points in line with those expected for their age, children in EYFS make an excellent beginning to their schooling. The high-quality teaching and leadership they receive prompts outstanding progress. Their standards exceed expectations when they leave Reception. Progress in Key Stage 1 is equally strong, while in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. Overall, therefore, their achievement from entering to leaving school is good. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are well above average. While this reflects good overall teaching and learning, it also owes a great deal to the highly positive ethos which pervades the school. Pupils subscribe to the principle that they should work hard, respect one another and enjoy school.

Building such attitudes has been one of the headteacher's key aims. Success in this area means that personal development of pupils continues to be a real strength of the school. It stems from a remarkably consistent approach from staff and the headteacher's fine example. In every situation, pupils are set the highest possible standards regarding behaviour, helping others, working together and respecting difference. Care, guidance and support of these personal skills and attitudes are excellent. Pupils are remarkably mature and polite, and adept at working together or independently. They are extremely keen to help in school or in the village, taking a leading role, for instance, in organising and running well attended Spring Fairs, while Year 5 and 6 raised significant funds for charity. The school's citizenship and endeavour awards are highly rated by pupils. Awareness of safety and health issues are extremely good. Above all, their enjoyment of lessons and school life in general is exceptional. There is scope for guidance of academic progress to build on recent improvement. This is because older pupils do not always know clearly how well they are doing and precisely what they must do to reach higher standards.

Parental questionnaires indicate unanimous and enthusiastic support. This exceptional level of approval is well founded and indicative of the school's place in the local community. Its contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. Not only do pupils play the excellent role described above, but the school premises operate as the village hall, youth club, after-school cinema and weekly doctor's surgery. There are close links with both Anglican and Baptist churches in the village and community organisations lead local historical walks and tours to add to the pupils' programme of educational visits. Wider links include a very effective sports partnership with a local secondary school and a newly formed partnership with a school in China.

The school has built up an excellent curriculum. Through links with a local secondary school, it offers good specialist provision in languages, physical education, science, mathematics, and design and technology. Extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum extremely well. Numerous clubs exist, with highly impressive take-up by pupils. An entire year group, for instance, attend the gymnastic club run by their teacher.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Outstanding lessons are common in some areas, especially in EYFS and Key Stage 1. The picture is more mixed in Key Stage 2, with satisfactory practice predominating, enriched by a minority of good or excellent lessons. Crucial to the best teaching are very high levels of pupil involvement, extremely strong pace and work to challenge

more able pupils throughout the lesson. In some instances, pupils constantly work at their limits, enjoying every minute, desperate to contribute and taking great pleasure in outdoing their previous achievements. Where such features are absent or less well developed, progress is satisfactory and the pace is slow. Clarity about how to improve is also strongest in the best lessons, whereas some older pupils with the desire to lift their performance lack a clear grasp of how to do so. The school's overall quality of teaching and learning is reflected in pupils' good achievement. In Key Stage 2, however, older pupils do not sustain the same rapid progress they showed earlier, because teaching is less effective. This is because some staff do not always use the information they have to guide pupils towards even higher standards.

Overall leadership and management are good and excellent features exist. The headteacher provides outstanding drive and direction and has created very good teamwork. Many very good decisions have been made, which have raised standards in, for instance, EYFS provision, the training of subject leaders and increased use of teaching assistants. Governors have played an important part in these changes and show an extremely good knowledge of the school. They clearly support and shape the school's work. They, and the headteacher, are aware that weaker performance in parts of Key Stage 2 are constraining standards and achievement and decisive action to significantly improve teaching quality is now being taken. Overall, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and effective and its capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children clearly love their learning in the Reception class and achieve excellently. Provision for the care and welfare of children and the quality of learning and development is outstanding. Children thrive from the day they join the school. Parents are rightly delighted with the start their children get. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. From the outset, children learn how to become independent thinkers and learners. They show high levels of confidence and rapidly learn to work together. In all aspects of their learning and development, they are encouraged to make choices, so that learning takes account of their interests and abilities. Their behaviour is excellent and they show outstanding understanding of classroom routines. Relationships with each other and with adults are very strong so that young children feel secure and settle very quickly. Effective liaison with pre-school providers also supports a smooth start to school. The learning environment is delightful. Space is used well, both inside the classroom and outside, and resources are plentiful and well chosen to support all areas of learning. Displays reflect the curriculum effectively and are dynamic, helping to ensure that children are very well motivated. Information and communication technology is used effectively to assist children in quickly acquiring basic skills, which they use confidently, for example, self-registering in the morning. It also enhances their learning when, for instance, they look at how letters are formed. Assessment is thorough and ongoing and planning reflects the welfare, learning and development needs of all pupils and their interests very effectively. Activities ensure that there is an excellent balance of those that are led by an adult and those that enable the children to dictate the direction and pace. Teaching is excellent. It is dynamic, ensuring that pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress from their starting points. There is outstanding teaching of basic skills across all areas of learning and many opportunities for children to practise these across all subjects. No opportunity to consolidate learning is missed, such as colour-matching drinking cups with fruit, counting them out and matching their shapes. Leadership of the EYFS is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise rates of progress in Key Stage 2 by increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and improving the use of all the information staff have to guide pupils' learning.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/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?	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	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	2

The quality of provision

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?	1
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?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Sampford Community Primary School, Essex, CM10 2RL

Thank you for your friendly welcome when my colleague and I visited your school last week. We were very impressed by lots that is going on. You said very positive things about the school and your parents think it is doing a really good job. We agree with you all because it is a good school. Many things it does are excellent.

Its best features include:

- your excellent behaviour, your enjoyment of school and your contribution to other pupils, people in the village and to charities
- the way the school provides opportunities for you to get involved in clubs, activities and visits and the clear guidance you get on how you are expected to behave
- the outstanding overall quality of the work in the reception class
- the headteacher's excellent leadership
- the outstanding teaching in many areas of the school
- the good progress you make and the high standards you reach by the time you leave the school.

If the school is to improve further it needs to make sure:

- that the progress older pupils make is as good as the excellent progress made in the rest of the school. This involves improving teaching and the information the pupils have to improve their standards.

If you are working towards Key Stage 2 tests, you can help by making sure you ask your teachers what levels you are working at and what you have to do to reach the next level up.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Great Sampford.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector