

Great Dunham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120811
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327369
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Gardner
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Bone
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2006
School address	Litcham Road Great Dunham Kings Lynn Norfolk PE32 2LQ
Telephone number	01328 701357
Fax number	01328 701082
Email address	head@greatdunham.norfolk.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). HMI visited seven lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, staff, the chair of governors, pupils and a representative from the local authority. She observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring records, pupil tracking data and 23 parent questionnaires.

HMI reviewed many aspects of the school's work, including looking in detail at the following:

- the children's attainment on entry and their progress throughout the Foundation Stage
- the school's interpretation of data and the progress and attainment of current pupils
- the accuracy and reliability of assessment
- the quality of teaching in writing
- the links between the outcomes of self evaluation, the analysis of pupil performance data, staff development and the priorities identified in improvement plans

Information about the school

Great Dunham Primary School is a small village school which draws pupils from the local community and beyond. The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Great Dunham Primary School is a good school with many strengths. It is an inclusive school where pupils are encouraged and enabled to meet their potential. Pupils are very well motivated. They feel safe and are well cared for. This has a positive impact on their well-being. Pupils are confident learners and encouraged to develop a wide range of interests. As a result, they are very good at engaging in lively debate.

The small number of pupils in each year group makes it difficult to make direct comparisons of pupils' attainment from year to year. However, over a three year period, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been above the national average. Pupils' attainment in writing has improved since the last inspection. There has been an increased focus on planning opportunities for pupils to reinforce their writing skills across the curriculum, which has led to pupils making good progress. However, their progress in mathematics is not as consistent in some classes. This is because work is not always well matched to the learning needs of different ability groups.

Overall, teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers plan interesting lessons. Care, support and guidance are outstanding. Pupils with additional learning needs are very well supported and make very good progress. Able pupils, too, are well catered for. They possess lively and enquiring minds. Their thinking is extended well through a range of activities. In the Foundation Stage, however, children are not making as much progress as they could because learning objectives are not always well focused upon developing children's skills and adults are not always well deployed to support children's learning.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. Leaders and managers possess a shared vision for the future. It is a learning school and an improving school. Links between self evaluation and improvement planning are well established. Priorities for action are clear. However, success criteria are not, currently, well focused enough on raising attainment and pupils' outcomes. This is an area for further development.

There is a very good ethos and a strong sense of teamwork. The view of one parent sums up the views expressed by several: 'the school always seems to be full of new ideas, trips, events etc. which my child enjoys.' Great Dunham School is a happy

school. It provides good value for money. There is ample evidence of improvement over time and of well conceived plans for the future. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the outcomes of children in the Foundation Stage by:
 - setting well defined learning objectives which are focused upon enabling children to make good progress towards meeting the early learning goals.
 - making good use of adults to support children's learning.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by planning tasks which are well matched to the different age and ability ranges within a class.
- Incorporate well defined success criteria in improvement plans, which are focused upon improving pupils' outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science is above the national average. Until recently, girls did better than boys, particularly in mathematics and science, but now there is no perceptible difference in their performance. Similarly, writing has improved significantly during the last year. On examining current Year 6 pupils' work, there is ample evidence of pupils working at higher levels in writing. The attainment of pupils with additional learning needs is consistently above the national average for pupils in similar circumstances. In Key Stage 1, too, overall attainment at the end of Year 2 is normally above average although it dipped in 2008. This year, the attainment of Year 2 pupils is broadly average across all subjects.

Pupils made good progress in the lessons observed. However, on examining their work and the school's own data, it is evident that some are not making as fast progress in mathematics as they are in English. Their starting points in mathematics are lower.

Pupils enjoy school immensely, attend regularly and are very well motivated to learn. Their behaviour is excellent. They are not afraid to ask or answer questions because they know it is safe to make mistakes. Their understanding of adopting a healthy lifestyle is excellent. The majority of pupils thoroughly enjoy participating in sporting and musical events. Many learn a musical instrument. They make a positive contribution to the school and wider community in many ways. For example, one pupil teaches the recorder to younger pupils and pupils talk enthusiastically about their concerts and performances to residents in a local nursing home. They are very interested in growing organic produce and preserving the environment through their recycling efforts.

Pupils are very good at expressing their opinions and at listening to others. Those on the school council work as a team. They are developing good financial management skills as they manage a budget and weigh up their spending priorities. The pupils' spiritual development is developing well and they are acquiring a good understanding of cultural differences through their links with a school in Sri Lanka. Pupils possess a keen sense of right and wrong and of the need to be fair in their dealings with people.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to capture pupils' interests. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and learning. Questioning is supportive. Teachers achieve a good balance between asking questions which require short answers and extending pupils' thinking through the use of more probing questions. Explanations are clear. However, on scrutinising pupils' work, it is evident that pupils of differing abilities are sometimes set the same mathematics work, and also that some pupils are not being moved on to the next stage fast enough. Marking is encouraging although it does not always give pupils enough advice on how to improve their work. Some pupils' work is not well presented.

Pupils' progress and attainment is tracked closely and recorded clearly throughout the year. Assessment is accurate. Teachers make good use of the outcomes to target pupils at risk of underachieving, to make provision for able pupils and to support those who perform just below average levels. Personalised learning is a strong

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

feature.

Teaching assistants offer good academic guidance as well as pastoral support, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils are encouraged to set their own targets and to take ownership of them. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging them to become independent learners. The school has good links with other professionals to support pupils with specific additional learning needs. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning.

The *Every Child Matters* agenda underpins everything the school does. The school is successful in planning a curriculum which not only develops pupils' knowledge, basic skills and understanding, but also extends their interests. In response to identified weaknesses in writing, pupils are provided with more opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences in subjects other than English. The curriculum is enhanced significantly by extra-curricular musical and sporting activities, and also by a strong focus on environmental education. The focus on healthy living is very well reinforced. The curriculum also prepares pupils well for issues they might encounter as they get older. For example, Year 6 pupils attend a session every year to learn about hazards that they may meet as they gain more independence. Despite the lack of a school hall, the school makes good alternative provision for indoor physical education. There is excellent outdoor sports provision.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher who is supported ably by the staff and governors. There is a strong sense of team work. Staff and governors possess a clear vision for driving improvement. They know where the strengths and weaknesses lie and there is clear evidence of improvement over time. This is exemplified by the school's success in tackling the issue of improving the quality of writing. Self evaluation is accurate. The leadership team and curriculum committee conduct a thorough analysis of pupil performance data. Governors strike an excellent balance between challenge and support. Their monitoring visits serve a very useful purpose as they enable governors to get to know the school and share their perspective with the senior management team.

Improvement planning is well established. A three-year plan incorporates well defined strategic objectives and clear priorities for action. However, success criteria relate more to process than to outcomes. There is scope for defining success criteria

further in terms of raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress.

The school is an inclusive school. There is a strong adherence to promoting equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination. The school's ethos is characterised by a high level of respect for individual differences and by zero tolerance of disrespect. Safeguarding procedures are well documented and implemented strictly. All staff attend regular training sessions to ensure that they are fully up-to-date and knowledgeable about how to ensure pupils' safety. Communication with parents is mostly good and parents speak highly of the school. A minority would like to receive more regular feedback on their children's progress.

The school is pro-active in promoting partnership links. It works successfully with nearby schools to provide sporting opportunities and extension activities for able pupils. There are good arrangements for ensuring that pupils experience a smooth transition to secondary school.

Promoting community cohesion is high on the agenda. The school is not complacent in recognising the challenges faced by a small rural school in preparing pupils to live in a multi-cultural society. It is aware of where pupils' understanding needs developing further. For example, a trip has been planned to increase pupils' understanding of travellers in the community.

The school provides good value for money. The staff/pupil ratio is good. Outcomes are good. Pupils learn in a stimulating and well ordered environment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entering the Reception class are generally below age-related expectations for four and five year olds. Their strongest skills lie in their dispositions and attitudes to learning while they are weakest in some aspects of their mathematical development, especially in calculating, measuring and their knowledge

and understanding of shape and measures. By the end of the year, most are working just within the early learning goals in most areas of learning. Children enjoy being at school and their social skills develop well. Most understand the importance of sharing and listening to others. They get along well together and want to learn. Careful records are maintained of children's progress towards meeting the early learning goals. They confirm that children make satisfactory progress throughout their year in Reception. Their individual profiles provide a good pictorial record to inform assessment.

Children are taught in a mixed age class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Separate provision is made for them within the classroom. The curriculum is planned to reflect a good balance between child initiated activity and adult initiated activity. However, teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to guide the children's learning and to assess their understanding. Opportunities are lost to extend children's vocabulary and to engage children in extended conversation, either individually or in a small group. In the activities observed, there was an over-emphasis on completing a task rather than developing skills. Learning objectives are not always clear. This is because planning is more activity based than focused upon skills to be developed.

Children feel secure and safe in the classroom and outside. Safeguarding procedures are secure. The outdoor area has been improved significantly and there are adequate play resources. The children's welfare needs are met well. Leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of provision.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Dunham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 23 completed questionnaires which represented 31 children. In total, there are 58 parents and carers registered at the school.

Parents commented very positively on their children's enjoyment of school, the pupils' behaviour, the broad range of curricular opportunities and the quality of leadership and management. Several had moved their children to Great Dunham Primary School and were pleased with the way they had settled. A minority would like to have more information on their children's progress.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	10	2	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Dunham Primary School, Great Dunham. PE32 2LQ

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed talking to you and coming into your lessons. It was good to see how much you enjoy school and want to learn. I particularly enjoyed meeting the school council. I think you work really well as a team. In fact, the whole school is a happy school where everyone gets on well together and where you can participate in lots of interesting activities. You make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that when you leave in Year 6, you are well prepared for your next school. I was particularly pleased to see how well your writing had improved. Those of you in Reception have a lovely outside area and it was good to see you learning and playing out there.

Your teachers plan interesting lessons and they encourage you to develop lots of interests too. You are very well cared for and supported. Your school is in a beautiful setting and well done for caring about the environment. I hope all your vegetable growing produces a good crop!

Mrs Bone and the governors lead your school very well. They have plenty of plans for the future and this is why we say your school is a learning and an improving school. Staff and governors are always thinking of ways to help you learn even more. During my visit, I had lots of conversations, particularly with Mrs Bone and I suggested a few ways which the school might like to consider. Firstly, I suggested that the youngest pupils had lots of opportunities to develop their skills by talking individually and in groups to adults who work with them. Secondly, I suggested that staff looked at your mathematical activities to ensure that the work is always challenging for you all. The third suggestion related to the governors' improvement plan and I discussed that with Mrs Bone.

I hope you have a very good rest of term and that the football final, which was cancelled because of rain, will be going ahead soon.

Good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Tricia Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

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