

Gretton Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121823 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 327578 |
| Inspection date | 24 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | John Mason |

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 | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 106 |
| 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 | Kerry Greenan |
| Headteacher | Jane Dooley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Kirby Road Gretton Corby NN17 3DB |
| Telephone number | 01536 770366 |
| Fax number | 01536 770366 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Gretton Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils come from the village of Gretton and its immediate vicinity. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is small. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds Gold Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in the Reception class. A privately run nursery is also accommodated within the school premises.

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: 3

- Gretton Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils' personal development is good because pastoral care is good and staff offer a wealth of additional activities which help children to enjoy their learning and their play. Pupils interact well with one another, make friends readily and respond well to adults. They are well looked after and feel safe and free from harm. Most pupils engage well in lessons and participate enthusiastically in school activities. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe through their diet, exercise and avoidance of undue risk. Children make good progress in the Reception Year and, by the time they enter Year 1, have skills which are above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress to maintain the advantage of a good start by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Standards are above average in Year 6. While standards since the previous inspection have slowly improved against the national picture in Key Stage 1, this has not been the case in Key Stage 2. The school is now prioritising this key stage, already improving the quality of writing and using the services of the local authority for support in literacy and numeracy.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers foster good relationships in class which enable pupils to benefit from learning in groups as well as individually. Activities are well matched to the different age ranges in certain classes, but teachers' expectations of presentation and attention to detail in written work vary too much. A recent focus on improving standards in literacy through improved assessment, planning and expectations of pupils' work is leading to greater accuracy in pupils' writing. However, the picture across the whole curriculum is not yet a consistent one. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory because improved academic guidance is only just beginning to have a full impact on raising standards. The curriculum is satisfactory because timetabling constraints are holding back the implementation of a more creative curriculum in which key skills can be applied and developed in more varied contexts.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors support the agenda of the recently appointed headteacher to raise standards and develop greater accountability of teachers for pupils' progress. Effective links have been made with the local authority to move this process on. More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is more accurately identifying pupils in need of support. Other key staff also set clear direction leading to improvement. Staff turnover, including staff leaving mid-year, has made for uneven implementation of change. Temporary appointments have ensured continuity of provision and these teachers are being well supported to address shortcomings in pupils' learning. Parents have understandable concerns linked to the degree of staffing change. Communications within the school have been dented by these changes and many parents feel communication from the head and governors could be improved. Because the school is working steadily to use assessment information better to support planning and is developing pupils' greater awareness of the next steps they need to take to improve, it has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with the skills expected for children of their age. Due to the good care and teaching they receive, they make good progress and enter Year 1 with above average standards. Children enjoy their time in Reception and they make good progress in their personal development, socialising well and developing good attitudes which assist their learning.

Assessment procedures are thorough and well-recorded for each child, helping teachers to plan activities which are well matched to children's learning needs. The teacher knows the children well and makes good use of questioning to help children reflect effectively on their developing language skills. The balance between teacher-led and child-focused activity is good. However, activities which are chosen by the children are sometimes directed too much by adults, so that children are not always able to develop their independence. Children enjoy working collaboratively with one another, for example by sharing counting activities, and the outdoor area is used to good effect. Partnerships with parents are good and good links with the on-site nursery and with Year 1 ease transition to the infants. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is well led and managed. Due care and attention is given to children's welfare, with good prioritisation of support for those in most need of it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring the measures introduced to improve achievement are implemented consistently by all staff.
- Share improving practice in assessment, planning and teaching in literacy across all areas of the curriculum.
- Raise teachers' expectations of pupils in respect of presentation, attention to detail and precision in written work across the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress in both infant and junior classes. Standards on entry to Year 1 are above average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above national averages. They are also above average by the end of Year 6. In 2008, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or higher in English was higher than in mathematics, but agreed targets were met. Science results were also above average. School tracking data indicates weaknesses in writing, now the focus of action to improve literacy. Continuity of learning of the current Year 6 has been unsettled by staffing change, but clear signs of improvement in the accuracy and presentation of written work are emerging. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress, because of the secure additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils reflect on their own actions and the actions of others with care and sensitivity. A small playground dispute, for example, was quickly resolved with an apology and an acceptance before the playground supervisor had the chance to investigate. Behaviour is satisfactory, rather than good, because in some lessons a few pupils can distract others from their learning. Teachers generally manage any off-task behaviour well. Effective playground buddies, keen librarians and school council initiatives help pupils to develop a good sense of community and responsibility. Activities such as Indian Dance Day and raising money for world charities help inform pupils of other cultures, but their understanding of the diversity of national and international cultural traditions and

beliefs lacks depth. Activemark and Healthy Schools awards attest to pupils' good understanding of healthy practice. Attendance has improved this year and is now satisfactory. Many days are lost by parents taking children on holidays during term time. Pupils' preparation for future stages in their education is good. Good social competences and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) complement above average standards in key areas of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers encourage good relationships and routines of working which enable pupils to respond well in class. Questioning is good, clarifying and consolidating what pupils are learning. Most tasks are well tailored to the different abilities and ages of pupils in class, but some group work lacks enough explicit direction to involve all pupils thoroughly in the activities. Teachers' expectations of presentation and attention to detail in written work vary too widely. Lesson objectives make clear the expected tasks of different groups of pupils, but they do not consistently make explicit what progress is expected of pupils in these tasks. The level of challenge and expectation for more able pupils is therefore not always obvious. In literacy lessons, pupils understand their targets. These link well with more consistent use of developmental comments in marking, helping to guide improvement in pupils' work better. This level of support is less evident in other areas of the curriculum. In some lessons where the pace of lessons slackens, a few pupils sometimes lose focus on the tasks in hand.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Opportunities to use laptops have improved access to ICT equipment and pupils are taught to use computers safely. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school. The programme for health, social and citizenship education supports good personal development. A good range of clubs are popular with the pupils and extend learning well, especially in sporting and artistic pursuits which are well attended by the small number of pupils who do not currently have two hours of physical education each week. Stimulating residential visits build pupils' self-esteem and a range of visitors enhance the curriculum. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Able children have opportunities to pursue interests, such as tuition on a musical instrument after attending courses available to all pupils. A more coordinated programme for providing for pupils with special gifts and talents is not yet fully embedded. Planning for cross-curricular links between subjects to maximise the impact of skills development is at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral support is good and children know that adults will address any concerns they have. Safeguarding meets current statutory requirements. Any anti-social incidents are effectively logged. The learning mentor helps pupils who find school difficult to grow in confidence and cooperate with others well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, including good liaison with outside agencies and effective learning plans. Attendance is improving due to the action of the school and its work with external agencies in promoting awareness of the benefits of regular attendance. Academic guidance has improved, with more

rigorous tracking of pupils' progress helping to target groups for extra support better. Marking gives better pointers for developing the quality of work. This is still a developing picture and not all areas of the curriculum provide the level of guidance which is developing in literacy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher appointed in September promptly identified a clear agenda for improvement which has the approval of the governors and which has involved the material support of the local authority. The school's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses, informed by careful monitoring of teaching and learning, is largely accurate and includes input from senior teachers and governors. New staff have successfully embraced key initiatives for improvement. Pupils' performance against challenging targets is now being well followed up so that appropriate support can be implemented. The school promotes equal opportunities and community cohesion satisfactorily, with some good initiatives in active citizenship, but audit and review of policies lack rigour. Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school and discharge their responsibilities satisfactorily.

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? | 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? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

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? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

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 | 3 |
| 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? | 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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| 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**

25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gretton Primary School, Corby, NN17 3DB

We very much enjoyed meeting you when we came to visit the school recently. In particular, we would like to thank you for the contribution you made to the inspection by talking to us openly and by saying what you thought about the school. Please also pass our thanks to your parents or carers who took the time to complete the very helpful questionnaires.

We were particularly impressed by the way you get on with one another and show very caring attitudes. Your involvement in the life of the school through the many activities in, for example, sport and music showed us how much you enjoy school. Older pupils are proud to be responsible by being librarians or playground buddies. You told us that you feel very safe at school, because adults set a good caring example to you.

We agree with the school that the standards of your work are above average, but that your progress is satisfactory. That is because by the time you leave Reception, where progress is good, your standards are already above average for five-year-olds. In fact, over recent years, standards have slowly improved in the infants, but this has not been the case in the juniors. School leaders are particularly keen to improve standards in the juniors.

We agree with the school that teaching is satisfactory too. There have been several changes of teachers in the last year and this has been unsettling for some of you. Because the school is concentrating on improving it, most of you are now benefiting from greater attention to the way your work is marked and are developing better standards in writing.

We have asked the school to do the following to help you progress more rapidly:

- make sure the school works together more to raise the standards of your work
- share the better teaching that has been introduced to improve your literacy, with all other subjects you learn
- concentrate on better presentation, detail and precision in all areas of your work.

I am sure many of you will have some good ideas of how to tackle the last of these. I wish you every success, particularly Year 6 who will soon be going to secondary school.

Yours sincerely

John Mason

Lead inspector