

Greens Norton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121974
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327610
Inspection date	26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	117
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	Jane Docking
Headteacher	Jan Pickering
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Calvert Road Greens Norton Towcester NN12 8DD
Telephone number	01327 350648

Age group	4–11
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01327 350648

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a Reception class. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is privately managed after-school provision on site. Decreasing numbers of pupils on roll in recent years mean that most pupils are taught in classes containing more than one year group.

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 school. It provides pupils with a caring and friendly setting in which to learn. Most pupils are supportive of the school and two parental comments are typical of many, 'Green Norton is a safe and caring school at the heart of the community' and 'There is a family atmosphere in which children of all ages mix and this has really helped to develop our children's personal and social skills.'

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with standards that are above average. Through the rest of the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards by the end of Year 6 that are above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement from their skill levels and abilities on starting school. Writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. This stems from inaccurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling and a lack of creativity when writing across the curriculum. The main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than better is the inconsistency in teaching and learning between classes. This leads to some pupils, especially the more able, not always being given work that challenges them effectively. They find the work too easy at times and so do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils have positive attitudes to lessons and are keen to learn. Relationships are good and lead to classrooms being friendly places in which to learn.

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the correct areas for development to be identified. This is shown in the way leaders have rightly prioritised the need to improve pupils' writing skills and increase their rate of progress. The checking and evaluation of teaching and learning is appropriate and has identified inconsistencies between classes. However, the action taken is not rigorous enough to bring about required improvement. Governors support the school well and are effectively developing their skills in holding leaders to account for its performance. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school's recent track record shows that the capacity of leaders to make any necessary changes is satisfactory.

Pupils' good personal development means they behave well and have good manners. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and, in so doing, make positive contributions to the life of the school and the local community. A good range of enrichment activities, such as extra-curricular activities, add further interest to the satisfactory curriculum. The way the curriculum is planned does not always enable pupils to build up their skills in a progressive manner. For example, there are times when pupils repeat the same activity in different year groups and this hinders the progress they make. Good links with other providers, such as professional sports coaches, further extend pupils' skills across a range of areas. The good pastoral care and support provided by the school is much appreciated by parents and pupils. Staff are firmly committed to the safety and welfare of all pupils and safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and are confident they would be listened to and helped by adults if they had any concerns or worries.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision enables children to make good progress and achieve well. Children enter school with skill levels and abilities that are above those typical for their age. Good teaching and

learning ensure they do well across all areas of learning and by the time they enter Year 1 they attain above average standards. Adults provide activities that are challenging and often linked to children's own experiences. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this makes a positive contribution to their development as independent learners. As a result, children are motivated to do well and are fully engaged in their learning. Children are friendly, well behaved and like coming to school. They share equipment, take turns fairly and work well together in pairs and small groups. This was evident in the role-play area when they were making a 'castle for the giant and a beanstalk for Jack'. Children show confidence when explaining what they are learning to visitors. Adults place strong emphasis on the health and well-being of all children and promote their welfare effectively. Children feel happy and safe, trusting the adults who look after them. Good leadership has rightly identified the need to improve the use of the outdoor area in order to better support children's learning throughout the day. The arrangements for introducing children to school are good and enable them to settle quickly into everyday routines. The good links with parents ensure they are kept fully informed about how well their children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' ability to write with accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling and use these skills to write creatively across the curriculum.
- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially the more able, by ensuring they are always given work that challenges them effectively.
- Improve curriculum planning to enable pupils to build up their skills and knowledge progressively.
- Act more rigorously on evaluations of teaching and learning to remove inconsistencies between classes.

A small proportion of 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' satisfactory achievement means that, by the end of Year 2, they attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and by the end of Year 6, in English, mathematics and science. Inconsistencies in teaching and learning between classes lead to pupils not always making the progress of which they are capable, particularly the more able. In English, pupils' skills in constructing sentences accurately and writing creatively are weaker elements of their performance. After a recent dip in standards in science, the school introduced a variety of initiatives to bring about improvement. These included greater emphasis on providing pupils with well structured scientific investigations and improving their skills in handling data when evaluating their findings. This has been successful and pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to attain above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties are given extra individual support and so make the same progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and act responsibly in and around school. They value the views and ideas of other pupils

and respect each other's feelings. Pupils work and play together amicably and there is a friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory rather than better because their awareness of life in a culturally diverse modern Britain is not as well developed as it could be. Pupils contribute well to school life by taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. In so doing, they enable all pupils to have a voice in how the school develops. They make a positive contribution to the local community through raising money for local charities and taking part in the annual Church Fete and the village Spring Show. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well and talk knowledgeably about the need to take regular exercise and eat healthily. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills in a satisfactory way and are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their lessons and work well together to discuss ideas and solve problems. They are curious, willing to ask questions and concentrate for lengthy periods. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so explain new ideas and demonstrate new techniques in a clear manner. They plan lessons well to give pupils opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs and small groups, which makes a positive contribution to their social development. However, teachers are not always effective in providing work that stretches pupils of different abilities and particularly those who are more able. Consequently, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Marking is not used consistently to guide pupils to how they might improve their performance. Teaching assistants give valuable support to all pupils and especially those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of extra-curricular activities, including dance, recorders and football. Good links with others, such as theatre groups and guest authors, effectively widen pupils' horizons and develop their skills further. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of educational visits available for them. They particularly enjoy the residential stays for pupils in Years 3 and 6 in which they work collaboratively in teams to carry out a variety of tasks. Curriculum planning does not always effectively meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-year group classes. It results in pupils being given work that has been covered previously and this hinders their progress. The good programme for personal and social development effectively promotes this aspect of pupils' learning. All pupils are given the opportunity to learn a foreign language and this makes a positive contribution to their cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's safeguarding arrangements include comprehensive child protection procedures in which all staff have been trained. As a result, they understand fully the course to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Thorough risk assessments are in place for activities in and around school and on visits. Good links with outside agencies, such as the Speech Therapy Service, ensures effective extra support is available for individual pupils, as

required. The procedures for tracking the progress that pupils make are satisfactory and give a clear view of the achievement and attainment of individual pupils. However, the information collected is not always used consistently by teachers in planning lessons to set work that effectively challenges pupils of different abilities. This is especially the case for more able pupils. The guidance for pupils to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides a good role model, carrying out her responsibilities diligently. Her clear vision for school improvement is shared by all involved in the life of the school. A variety of professional development opportunities are provided for staff to extend their expertise. These are linked well to individual needs and whole-school issues. Good links have been made with other organisations to effectively promote the care and support of all pupils. The procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory and accurately identify areas for further development. However, these evaluations are not acted upon rigorously enough to bring about improvement, particularly in ironing out inconsistencies between classes. Community cohesion is promoted in a satisfactory way, particularly within the school and local community, in which everyone is treated equally and fairly. Leaders are rightly seeking to extend this aspect of the school's performance by raising pupils' understanding of life within a culturally diverse, modern Britain.

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

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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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

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?	3

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	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**

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greens Norton Church of England Primary School, Greens Norton, NN12 8DD

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the interesting things you do. Your school is satisfactory. It helps you make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

What we found about your school:

- It is a friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- Anyone who needs extra help with their work is always given it.
- You show a good understanding of how to live healthily and stay safe.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, in and around school and on visits.
- The after-school clubs and a wide range of visits and visitors add further interest to the curriculum.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Improve your ability to write accurately and creatively.
- Give you work that always makes you think hard so you make faster progress, especially those who find work easy.
- Improve the way the curriculum is planned so you do not do work already covered in a different year group.
- Work even harder to make sure all of you make progress at the same rate.

You can all help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities and being kind and considerate to others.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector