

Greenfylde Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123764
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327981
Inspection date	24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	305
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	Gordan Twinberrow
Headteacher	John Jeffery
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	Silver Street Ilminster TA19 0DS
Telephone number	01460 52686
Fax number	01460 55780

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

- The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:
- Attainment and achievement across the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but especially in Key Stage 2 and for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose first language is not English.
- The quality of the provision for children in the Reception classes, especially in personal and social development.
- How well the school promotes community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, pupils and staff, visits to classes and a scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of other aspects of the school day such as break-time, an analysis of parents' questionnaires, and school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, records of visits by other external assessors and minutes of meetings. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school, serving mainly the town of Ilminster. Around one quarter of the children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage of education. The proportion of girls is larger than in most schools. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is less than in most schools, as is the proportion who do not have English as their first language. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Greenfylde Church of England First School is an outstanding school. It enables pupils to achieve very well and attain high standards. Parents are full of praise for the school and the excellent leadership of the headteacher. A large number of parents wrote in support of the school, one of whom said, '... the teaching staff encourage each child to reach their full potential'. Another said, 'Our children's academic achievements to date have exceeded our expectations.'

Children start school with skills well below those normally found at that age. The outstanding teaching, together with a high quality curriculum, ensures that pupils make excellent progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 4, standards are well above those normally expected at this age. Standards are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Excellent procedures for checking on the work of the school are used effectively to identify areas for improvement and raise standards. For example, teachers recognised that pupils in Years 3 and 4 were not making as much progress as in Years 1 and 2. Extremely effective steps have been taken to remedy this by checking on what pupils need to do to improve their learning and then setting challenging but achievable targets for them. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 now make excellent progress due to the stimulating and motivating teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support from talented teaching assistants. As a result, they are fully included in lessons and make similar progress to other pupils.

The curriculum provision is excellent, with a wide range of extra activities, visits and visitors. Pupils and parents speak with enthusiasm about the way that teachers make learning interesting and fun. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities provided to keep fit and enjoy sport. They understand why good food is important and know how to eat healthily. Recent changes to the curriculum, such as the focus on developing pupils' social and emotional attitudes, make a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development, especially their excellent spiritual, moral and social development. The high quality provision enables pupils to develop an awareness of others and an understanding of feelings and emotions. Pupils' cultural development is good. Although they have a strong understanding of how people in other countries live, their understanding of the rich diversity of cultures found in Britain remains a comparative weakness. The school has identified this and their draft strategy for promoting community cohesion outlines ways in which pupils can be helped to learn more about different cultures, faiths and religions in Britain.

Behaviour is excellent. A calm and purposeful atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils say that they enjoy school immensely and this is evident in their very positive attitudes to learning and the respect that they show for adults in the school and each other. They are keen to take part in all the activities provided. Surprisingly, attendance remains only average. The strenuous efforts of the school to improve attendance are limited because a small but significant group of parents continue to take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils are caring and considerate to one another, helping each other whenever possible. They contribute very well to the smooth running of the school and, in doing so, gain valuable skills that, together with the high standards attained, help them prepare for their future economic well-being. Parents are rightly impressed by the very high quality care and guidance in this school. Pupils feel safe and, as a result of the excellent guidance, know how to stay safe. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants and plan carefully to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. Good quality questioning encourages pupils to think and reflect. Marking helps pupils know what

they need to do next to improve their work. The systems for recording how well pupils are doing have recently been improved to ensure that the progress of different groups of pupils can be monitored. This is enabling these pupils to receive guidance and support matched very closely to their needs. High quality partnerships with other schools and the local authority agencies ensure that any pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate additional support. Parents feel closely involved in the school and the vast majority feel that they are well informed about how well their child is doing. Pupils appreciate the excellent teaching and speak highly of the help that they get from teachers and teaching assistants.

Inspectors agree with parents who feel that the significant improvement that has taken place since the last inspection reflects the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff. Governors support the school extremely well. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development through their effective systems for monitoring the work of the school. Budget management is exemplary as governors strive to balance curriculum needs against the difficulty of maintaining an old building that is rapidly showing signs of not being fit for purpose. All statutory requirements are met, although, despite the good quality efforts to promote community cohesion, the governors have yet to approve and adopt the draft policy and strategy for this area. The very significant improvements made since the last inspection clearly demonstrate that the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make a very good start in this school. The transition is eased by the strong links with playschools and the Children's Centre. The environment in the Reception classes and the high quality outdoor area is stimulating and exciting. Nevertheless, the school is aware that the old and rambling accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage makes further improvement to the environment difficult to achieve. The excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the needs of the children are met consistently. Teachers are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The expertise and skill of the adults and the rigorous systems for checking on progress mean that all individuals are gently but effectively challenged to achieve of their best. This sets the tone for the rest of the school. A parent of a child in Reception summed this up by saying, 'I think this is a brilliant school; it is an absolute delight to have my youngest start her education at this fantastic school.' Children are really motivated to learn and all engage in activities. They clearly enjoy learning because of the well-paced lessons and are eager to talk about what they are doing. The excellent teaching ensures that children make outstanding progress to achieve the expected levels by the time they start Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- In light of the school's undoubted success this is what the school should do to improve further:
- Draw together and formalise the existing good practice on community cohesion and ensure that governors approve the draft policy and strategy
- Provide pupils with greater opportunities to learn about the diversity of cultures in Britain.

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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?	1
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	1

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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenfylde C of E First School, Ilminster TA19 0DS

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to look at your school. You gave us a lot of help in finding out about the school. We were very impressed with the polite way that you spoke with us and told us about your learning.

Your school is outstanding, and we can see why you enjoy school so much. Here are just a few of the things that we liked about your school:

- You make outstanding progress in your learning and by the time you leave the school at the end of Year 4, you are doing better in reading, writing and mathematics than many other children your age.
- You learn so well because the teaching is excellent. Your teachers and other adults make learning fun for you.
- The school has really good ways of checking how well you are learning and then helping you get even better.
- The headteacher and other senior teachers do an outstanding job in running your school. They have excellent ways of checking what is working and how to improve the school.
- The governors (the other adults who are responsible for the school) do a good job in making sure you have good teachers and enough equipment.
- There are only a few little things that we have asked the school to do to help keep your learning as good as it is:
 - We have asked the governors to make sure they know and agree what is being done to help you learn about other people in Britain and the rest of the world.
 - We have also asked teachers to find more ways to help you find out about all the different groups of people in Britain and how they live.

Thank you again for all your help.

With kind regards

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector