

# Green Park Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135197
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	329049
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	294
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Caroline Davis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	The Linces Buckland Dover CT16 2BN

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 November 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This above average size school opened in September 2007 following the amalgamation of two previously existing primary schools. The headteacher was appointed in January 2008. This is the school's first inspection. For its first year, the school operated on two sites a mile apart. In September 2008, the school was relocated on a single site on which there remains some incomplete construction work. With the move, the school no longer operates a Nursery, so children now join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in Reception. Almost all the pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. The school runs a breakfast club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Green Park Community Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It had a difficult first year, where it was operating, essentially, as two separate schools, each catering for pupils across the full primary age range. During this time, there was high staff turnover and there were many temporary teachers. The changes and uncertainties took their toll. Parents refer to a period of disorganisation and to pupils' behaviour being poor. With disruptions to learning, standards in the school's first year were very low and pupils underachieved. Now together on a single site, the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and a united staff team have wrought a transformation. Pupils and parents are beginning to perceive Green Park genuinely as a new school rather than a school that is new in name only.

This is most clearly evident in the turnaround in pupils' attitudes. More settled arrangements and consistent management have led to a dramatic improvement so that pupils' personal development is satisfactory, with some aspects, including behaviour, now good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. This, and the now more settled teaching, is enabling them to make satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils are catching up on previously lost ground and standards are beginning to rise. Standards are currently below average but that represents satisfactory achievement. The improvement is particularly noticeable in the EYFS, where children now get off to a good start.

Effective monitoring by school leaders has contributed to the significant improvement this year in the quality of education provided. A careful track is kept of each child's progress and additional support is put in place when pupils are identified as falling behind. School leaders' feedback to teachers on lessons they have observed has helped to improve teaching and learning. Pupils are actively involved and are keen to take part because teachers succeed in making lessons interesting and fun. Although often lessons move forward at a brisk pace, sometimes too long is allowed for some tasks. Where that happens, or where pupils are expected to sit on the floor listening passively for long periods, their attention begins to wander and the pace of learning slows. Targets are displayed in classrooms but these are not always written in language easily understood by the pupils. Teachers' marking, too, varies in quality. Too often marking gives insufficient guidance to pupils on the next steps they need to take to move their learning on. This means that although many aspects of provision for pupils' care and welfare are strong, the quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall.

Changes to the curriculum, including the introduction of government-sponsored initiatives such as reading recovery and the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), have been introduced this term. There are very early signs that these are beginning to have a positive impact. The introduction of setting, with pupils grouped by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons, is another new initiative. It enables teachers to match work more closely to pupils' different capabilities and to target support better, particularly for those pupils who need extra help with their learning. However, even within each set there is still quite a wide range of age and ability and teachers do not always vary the work in these and in other lessons to cater fully for this range.

The considerable improvements this year are the result of good leadership and management based on effective school self-evaluation and well-focused action to follow up on areas identified for development. The headteacher, governors and leadership team know that the school still

has much further to go, but the turnaround this year in the school's effectiveness shows its good capacity for improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

In 2008, standards at the end of the Reception year were low. The provision this year differs significantly from the school's first year. It is well run with, for example, different teachers and much more detailed record-keeping, including assessments of children's capabilities when they start school. Children join the Reception Year with skills below those expected for their ages. Good teaching and arrangements for their welfare are helping them to make good progress so that they are on track to start Year 1 next year with standards that are close to those expected for their ages. The children make especially good progress in their social development, responding well to the opportunities they are given for imaginative and cooperative play, both indoors and out. Outdoor activities are limited, however, by the lack of a covered area allowing the children to play outside when it is raining. The focus on teaching letters and sounds is making a significant impact on children's learning in language and literacy, but they make slower progress in their mathematical development because they are given fewer opportunities to learn and apply these skills.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that in all lessons, including those where pupils are taught in ability groups, work is carefully matched to pupils' different capabilities.
- Accelerate the pace of learning in lessons by giving pupils varied activities and making sure that they are not expected to sit for too long on the carpet.
- Give pupils clear guidance through marking and easily understood targets that show them exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

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**

Standards are below average, but are up on the poor results in the 2008 national tests. Whereas pupils underachieved during the school's first year, they are now achieving satisfactorily. This is due to the improved and more settled teaching and the pupils' much more positive attitudes and response. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to the others in their classes because they benefit from good support. This is true for the many with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as well as those with moderate learning difficulties and those who need extra help with language and communication. Pupils' progress in key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' behaviour is vastly improved over the past year. It is now good as a result of the positive role models provided by adults and their high expectations of behaviour. Pupils conduct

themselves safely and responsibly in and around the school. They understand how their actions affect others. They get on well with each other, and the many adults in the school, and this contributes to the pupils' sense of safety and security. The comment from a pupil, 'It's good that everyone looks different', shows that the children generally appreciate ethnic diversity, but they do not have many opportunities to interact with or learn much about other cultures. Attendance, while still below the national average, has improved as a result of the school's successful liaison with external agencies and parents. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular clubs and appreciate the range on offer. The positive contribution made by pupils to school life is reflected in the school council's sense of responsibility as representatives of the wider school community. Many pupils talk knowledgeably about the need for a healthy diet, but they do not always practise what they preach, often preferring crisps to the fruit encouraged by the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The improvements in teaching and learning are due to more settled staffing and the positive way teachers respond to school leaders' feedback on the lessons they observe. Throughout the school, teachers get on well with their pupils and they are successful in engaging their interest. When they pose questions to the class, often almost every hand goes up to answer. Sometimes, however, pupils are expected to sit on the carpet listening for too long or are given too long for particular activities. Where this occurs, their attention drifts and they make less progress in the lesson. Teaching assistants are often used well to support those pupils who need extra help with their learning, or extra direction to keep them well behaved and focused, but in some classes they are underutilised. This means that they are left as passive observers when they could be deployed to take a more active role in supporting the teacher or making notes for the teacher on, for example, which children are less actively involved in answering the teacher's questions. Work in lessons is not always closely enough matched to the widely different abilities in each class.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Many plans for extending the curriculum, for example by linking subjects together, are still at the planning stage, but recent initiatives to boost achievement and standards are showing early signs of positive impact. Teaching English and mathematics in ability sets, for example, is helping to accelerate progress, although teachers are not always ensuring that, within sets, work is closely enough matched to pupils' different abilities. Teachers make use of ICT in lessons but they do not give pupils enough opportunities to use computers themselves. For example, it is almost always teachers and rarely pupils who use the interactive whiteboards. Pupils greatly appreciate the various clubs on offer. One enthusiastic pupil told inspectors, 'The clubs here are fantastic.' Special days, for example when all pupils dress as book characters, and visits and visitors to school help to enrich and enliven the curriculum. Children in a Years 1/2 class were thrilled at seeing a live tarantula brought in by a parent – literally bringing to life the work they had been doing on 'scary spider stories'.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Teachers and school leaders keep a careful track of pupils' progress and use this information well to put in place extra support to boost performance of pupils who fall behind. Marking, however, does not always give pupils clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. The targets displayed on the wall in classes are often written in educational jargon that is difficult for the pupils to understand.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and the school is developing a growing partnership with parents. One parent said, 'My child's problems have been dealt with in an exceptional manner. Staff really seem to listen and care for the pupils.' Regular coffee mornings encourage the involvement of parents who may otherwise be reluctant to come into school. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive extra support where needed. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are clear and effective and they are confident they can always turn to a member of staff for help.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

After a very shaky start, the turnaround this year has been impressive. The headteacher and school leaders have been successful in forging a united staff team with a shared commitment to raising standards and opportunities for Green Park's pupils. The school has set very ambitious targets for improved standards this year and in the years ahead, and these, along with incisive monitoring, are helping to drive rapid improvement. Inevitably, the urgent focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy has meant slower progress in some other areas. In particular, the school remains at an early stage in its promotion of community cohesion, for example in broadening pupils' awareness of people from different backgrounds and in strengthening the bridge with those in the local community still resentful at the loss of the two previous schools.

The school is adjusting well to its move to a single site, although some of the work is incomplete. Some classes are in temporary classrooms, pending the building works currently underway, and some areas of the school are in a tatty state as they have not been decorated since long before Green Park was established. The uneven surface of the sloping area between the buildings and the playground presents a potential trip hazard and the lack of fencing to the field, which has been raised as a concern by parents and governors, means that staff have to limit pupils' access to the field other than with quite extensive supervision.



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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
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?	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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	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	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**

29 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Green Park Community Primary School, Dover, CT16 2BN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your parents told us that the move to create a new school has not been an easy one, and it was particularly difficult for you last year when the school was operating on two different sites. All the disruption last year meant you did not do as well as you should, and you and your parents told us that behaviour was a problem last year too.

The good news is that we could see that things are getting better. Now that the school is on a single site and that staffing is much more settled, Green Park is providing you with a satisfactory education. The turnaround shows that your school is well run and the children in Reception are getting off to a good start. Through the rest of the school, you are enjoying your lessons and the interesting things you get to do, and teachers are helping you to learn and to make sound progress. Although you listen well in lessons and it was good to see how keen you all are to answer questions and to join in, we could see that, sometimes, attention drifts when teachers give you too long for an activity or when you have to sit on the carpet listening for too long. We have asked the teachers to vary activities more to avoid this. We have also asked teachers to make sure that you all have work that is matched to your different abilities.

We were really pleased to see how much your behaviour has improved this year. Keep it up! You all get on well together, which is helping you to feel safe at school. You told us lots about healthy eating, but we were disappointed to see that when you come to actually choose snacks many of you are still going for the less healthy options. That is something you could do more to improve.

Staff take good care of you but we have asked them to give you more help through targets and marking to show you what you can do to make your work better. You can help here too by carefully reading and following the comments that teachers write and doing your very best to achieve your targets.

Yours faithfully Selwyn Ward Lead inspector