

Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110831
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337584
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Alastair MacGregor
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Evans
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors with a further inspector evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures for half a day. Inspectors spent 60% of their time looking at teaching and learning. Fourteen lessons were observed and included most class teachers. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Telephone discussions were held with the school improvement partner and the local education officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at assessment data, information about various school activities, the school development plan and the 94 returned parents' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- progress made by pupils, particularly by the end of Year 6
- the extent to which teaching enables pupils to learn well and make good progress in lessons
- how far the particularly good care and support provided by the school have been sustained since the last inspection
- the rigour of monitoring and evaluation and the extent to which staff and governors are involved in the process.

Information about the school

The school is of average size. It is oversubscribed. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a modest increase in the number of pupils from other ethnic groups though very few are at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has also increased steadily and is above the national average. High staff turnover, mentioned in the last inspection, has been largely resolved and the teaching force is now more stable. There is an independently run pre-school and after-school club facility on the site, which is inspected separately. The school gained the International Schools Award in 2008.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school has had to cope with challenging circumstances over an extended period. This slowed efforts for continued school improvement. Despite these problems, the school has sustained most of the good features identified in the last inspection. All this has been possible because of the very strong support of governors, the steadfastness of the headteacher and the good morale and commitment of the staff. Standards continue to be higher than average, because teaching and the care and support of pupils are good and pupils' progress has improved.

In most years, children start in the Reception class a little above average and pupils finish in Year 6 significantly above average. Last year was an exception with a less strong cohort that attained lower standards. The overall trend has been a small but steady improvement in pupils' progress since the last inspection. Current mathematics standards show considerable improvement but, in English, pupils' writing does not match their very strong reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress.

Pupils' good spiritual development is helped by the school's strong Christian values demonstrated in assemblies. Their cultural development is satisfactory rather than good but the moral and social aspects are mostly good. Pupils like school and are actively involved in the many activities inside school. Pupils respond very positively to the opportunities to make decisions in the class. The school councils and older pupils help considerably through the reading partners and buddy systems as well as representing the views of their classmates. Pupils are also very active in the local village community most notably through a current installation art project. Most reflect relatively mature attitudes for their age including support for a healthy lifestyle. Pupils participate actively in lessons and behave well, although a few need occasional reminders to pay attention. Most lessons are well planned with effective class management. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of different resources including the interactive whiteboard and prepare learning activities that are interesting and have different levels of challenge. There is considerable variation between classes in terms of the quality of assessment and, while there is some excellent practice showing pupils how to improve, other marking is less helpful.

The curriculum is satisfactorily planned and the school is looking to improve it. There are good examples of creative and innovative practice but the main strength is the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including music, drama and sports. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy has benefited standards. However, the various breaks in activity, particularly in the morning, reduce teaching time. Care and guidance are key strengths and this is important because the school has a larger than average

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number of pupils with social and emotional needs. Children feel safe and well supported because of the schools' arrangements and links with other support agencies.

The school recognises that some developments have been slowed by recent staffing difficulties. However, staff morale is high and day to day management remains effective. Consequently, good provision and outcomes have been consistently maintained. Safeguarding procedures are strong and the overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe. Strong links exist with local social and welfare agencies and there is a strong focus on meeting individual pupils' needs. This underpins the school's commitment to ensure good equal opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. The headteacher and governors have provided strong leadership throughout and, with the problems resolved, are now able to take the school forward. The school has responded to the last inspection with effective tracking of pupils' progress and a more focused development plan. However, whole school development planning lacks rigorous and regular self-evaluation which involves all staff. Overall, the school has been successful in maintaining good effectiveness since the last inspection and current developments indicate that it has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing and enable more pupils to reach higher National Curriculum levels by:
 - sharing the best school practice in teaching and especially assessment that helps pupils know how to improve their work
 - providing clearer guidance to parents about their children's progress and how they can help their children improve
 - providing more lesson time earlier in the day, thereby increasing teaching time for Years 3-6, particularly for literacy and numeracy.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - involving more staff in monitoring and evaluating school provision
 - training all staff in the use of data to support school self-evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school has a very mixed intake which includes very able children as well as a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Standards on entry are a little higher than average and over their time in the school, pupils make good progress and leave with significantly higher than average attainment. National test results show that a less able Year 6 cohort in 2009 attained average standards, although this still represented good progress in relation to their starting points. The school has strong care and support systems and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities consequently make similarly good progress. Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress and are on target to achieve above average

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standards in literacy, numeracy and science by the end of the year. Standards over time have fluctuated though attainment in science has been consistently above the national average. Literacy, particularly reading, has tended to be better than numeracy. However, improvements in numeracy teaching have resulted in pupils in Year 6 being on target to achieve better than expected outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. With these improvements, writing is now a relatively weaker area and the school is placing a greater focus on this aspect by incorporating more extended writing tasks for pupils in lessons. It is also providing more challenging teaching and learning in all subjects so that pupils have better opportunities to read and write more extensively, as well as tackle challenging problem solving tasks in mathematics and science in order that a greater proportion can achieve higher levels.

The strong Christian ethos of the school underpins pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The various school activities, including the work of the school council, provide good opportunities for social development and the exceptional community and charity work helps pupils have a good moral awareness. Pupils attend very regularly and their secure basic skills, including in information and communication technology (ICT), contribute well to their economic well-being. Pupils are articulate and eager to discuss in lessons and although a few need to be reminded to listen, the great majority are fully involved in their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2

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

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

The great majority of parents and pupils appreciate the good quality of teaching. Teaching is mostly well planned and is characterised by positive but firm classroom management. However, there is still scope to improve the use of assessment so that teachers' planning is more closely tailored to the needs and abilities of all pupils. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards and there is an effective balance of whole class, group and individual work. The school's commitment to creative learning is reflected in a number of lessons that get pupils for example, to develop their story telling and even link it to music. There is good numeracy teaching in many lessons where the learning challenge is varied to meet the different pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are mostly used well, particularly in group work, though this is less so in those lessons when whole class teaching goes on too long. There is some excellent assessment practice by some teachers which involves pupils in self-assessment and shows them how to improve. However, in other classes, teacher's marking, while satisfactory, is not sufficiently informative to aid improvement.

The curriculum is currently undergoing revision to reflect the recent national changes which include working towards a more creative and integrated approach. There is an appropriate emphasis on providing more challenging literacy and numeracy work in lessons which is bringing about further improvement to standards in writing and mathematics. There is also a wide range of extra-curricular activities in music, drama, art and sports that are very popular. The school day is planned to provide variety but the amount of learning time is often reduced by the different changes in activity, particularly in the morning. The longer periods of learning are in the afternoon when staff comment that pupils are a little less focused.

Care and guidance have been consistent strengths of a school that knows its pupils very well and underpins the very effective contribution this is having on pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils comment that they feel safe in school reflecting good provision. They have responded well to the clear guidance about healthy lifestyles.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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Despite recent problems, the school has been consistently well led and managed by the headteacher. Staff are very supportive and ensured the school was effectively managed when she was absent.

The good partnerships with outside agencies and other schools have been sustained and pupils are well supported in a safe environment. All of this has been considerably helped by well informed governors who have, throughout, succeeded in ensuring policies and practices are fully in place. The one exception to this is the lack of a strategy for community cohesion although in practice the school has a strong sense of community and very good links with the local villages. Plans for a more structured system of regular school self-evaluation are only just being implemented but other aspects of leadership are strong which is increasingly leading to greater consistency in the teaching across classes. The school has a rigorous tracking system for pupils' progress, and there has been regular monitoring of teaching. The impact of this is evident in the improving pupils' achievement. School development planning is detailed and includes advanced plans for the development of the school site. However, the school recognises that it currently lacks a wide enough leadership team to fully build on this work, and that not all staff are sufficiently well involved in school improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children enter the Reception class with stronger than average speaking skills though some are weaker in terms of their social and emotional development and find it difficult to cooperate and follow instructions. Nonetheless, children are keen to learn and

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be involved in the different activities. Most make good progress because of good teaching and effective behaviour management. Consequently, children enter Year 1 with above average communication and numeracy skills though the school recognises that some children's social and emotional aspects are less developed and continued support. In lessons, children are challenged well to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, they are given good encouragement to write through target setting and the effective use of stimulus words displayed around the room. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and fully integrated into the life of the class. Good use is made of the accommodation including the outdoor area which, though not visually appealing, is used well for creative and imaginative activities. The school is in the process of improving this area. Teamwork is strong and teaching assistants play a full part in supporting children's learning. Overall provision is well managed though there had been some inaccuracy in recording children's progress as staff adapted to changes in assessment procedures This is being improved through greater moderation and staff training.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority think that the school is well led and managed and the teaching and support are good. About a fifth of those who replied thought that the school could keep them better informed about their child's progress. The inspectors found that, while the school uses all the usual means of communication through newsletters, reports and progress meetings, there are shortcomings in how well it shows pupils' progress and helps parents support learning at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	52	39	41	4	4	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	53	56	40	43	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	18	67	72	9	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	24	52	58	15	17	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	42	46	51	6	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	31	46	51	16	18	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	38	55	59	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	37	51	61	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	24	61	67	5	5	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	22	60	68	7	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	21	62	69	9	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	38	51	57	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	35	57	61	2	2	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great and Little Shelford CofE (Aided) Primary School, Cambridge, CB22 5EL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Yours is a good school where you are making good progress and attaining above average results by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Your school certainly seemed a happy, friendly place to be. It is especially good to see how you like to be actively involved in the various aspects of the school such as the school council and the sports, music and drama activities. The 'telephone box' installation looked fun and we noted how many of you were involved in charities and community activities.

Many of your parents told us how much many of you like school. It is certainly true that most of you get on with your teachers and want to do well. We know that you appreciate the good teaching and facilities in most of your subjects but some of you said you would like to have a better idea of how well you are doing in school. We have suggested to the school that your teachers' marking should include some information about the changes you need to make to improve your work.

Some of your parents said that they would also like more information about how you are progressing and we have suggested to the school that it provides more detailed information to parents.

We know that your teachers make considerable efforts to plan their lessons but we thought many of you might learn even better if more of your numeracy and literacy lessons were earlier in the day.

Most of you think that the school is very well run by the headteacher and staff and we have made the suggestions above as to how the governors and senior staff can make the school even better.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead Inspector

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