

Greensted Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114863
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338470
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Hunt
Headteacher	Mrs J Farrow
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed all seven teachers and sessions taught by higher level teaching assistants. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at samples of pupils' work, analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' and local authority monitoring, school improvement planning, risk assessments, the minutes of governors' meetings and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 21 parents and carers.

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

- the difference in pupils' attainment between mathematics and that in reading and writing
- the impact that the curriculum has had in motivating pupils and accelerating their learning
- the impact of support given to vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- measures taken by school leaders and governors to involve parents in their children's learning and improve attendance
- how progress and attainment have been raised in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This school is of average size. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very small numbers from different minority ethnic groups. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and these proportions are very high in Year 1 and 2. Around a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a much higher proportion than found nationally. The headteacher was appointed in May 2008, having previously been acting headteacher. Greensted Infant School and Nursery has Investors in People, Basic Skills, Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards. It offers an extended school day through a breakfast and after-school clubs.

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

Greensted Infant School and Nursery caters well for its pupils. A diet of consistently good teaching has enabled boys and girls of all abilities to make steadily good and better progress from the time they join in the Nursery and Reception Years to the end of Year 2. Many of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do exceptionally well because the staff are especially adept at early identification of their individual learning needs and putting in place carefully targeted support. School leaders take similar care in keeping track of pupils' progress and spotting any groups that need extra support. This has helped pupils in vulnerable circumstances and from relatively needy backgrounds to achieve well. For example, in other schools, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals generally attain below average standards, but at Greensted, this group attains nationally expected levels.

The headteacher's observations of lessons have helped to maintain consistent practice across the school, for example in ensuring that teachers routinely plan work in lessons that is matched to pupils' different capabilities. Because relationships throughout the school are good, pupils are well motivated. They do their best to listen carefully in lessons, although the attention of some boys, in particular, sometimes drifts when they are expected to listen passively for too long or when activities are not well paced. Pupils behave well and quickly learn to follow their class teachers' orderly routines. For some, this represents an impressive transformation. A feature that stands out in this school is the care and attention given to pupils including those who need help in managing their own behaviour and in avoiding potentially disruptive emotional outbursts. Special sessions in a sensory room have helped pupils with troubled backgrounds to settle in and to succeed in their learning. Drawing very effectively on an elaborate network of partnerships with outside agencies and social care organisations, the impact of the school's excellent care, guidance and support is also evident in the virtual elimination of exclusions. Pupils grow in self-esteem. The exceptionally thorough arrangements for ensuring their welfare and safeguarding also contribute to pupils' great feeling of safety at school and their overwhelming confidence that staff will help them with any problems they might have, for example friends falling out with each other. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. They all take part each morning with great enthusiasm in their 'wake and shake' dance and exercise sessions.

The school's curriculum is outstanding not merely because it is so carefully tailored to pupils' specific needs but because leaders and staff have been innovative in finding ways to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils' 'Disability Day' experiences of trying to get around the school in a wheelchair or wearing spectacles that simulate visual-impairment, have

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given pupils a genuine insight into disability and prompted them to write thoughtful and reflective accounts of the challenges faced by others. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing has traditionally lagged behind that in mathematics. Schemes have been introduced to develop pupils' vocabulary and accurate punctuation, and these show a positive impact in their written work. Teachers' marking and pupils' increasing involvement in checking their own and each other's work are helping to raise the quality of pupils' writing. However, this is limited to work in literacy, which means that pupils who now routinely punctuate with accuracy in literacy lessons are less rigorous when they write in other subjects. Nevertheless, teachers otherwise make good use of assessment information, particularly in planning well-targeted activities for their pupils. Teachers and support staff encourage pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through activities such as role play and the use of puppets. When modelling spoken English for pupils, however, staff do not always take sufficient care to distinguish between standard English and colloquial English or local dialect.

There have been many improvements since the last inspection, not least in pupils' attendance. This has been poor in the past, but rigorous chasing up of absences, incentive raffles, and the extensive efforts of leaders and staff to involve and engage with parents, have together led to a dramatic improvement. Attendance is now average. Successes such as this, coupled with the accuracy of school self-evaluation, show Greensted's good capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain a brisk pace of learning in all lessons by
 - ensuring that lesson introductions do not go on for too long
 - giving pupils enough time for individual and group activities but not so much time that their attention drifts.
- Further raise the quality of pupils' writing by
 - encouraging pupils routinely to check and correct their written work in all subjects in the way they do in literacy
 - marking written work in every subject with the same rigour as in literacy.
- Encourage all staff to clearly distinguish standard English from colloquial English and local dialect.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children start school in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are low in relation to their ages. Their language and social skills are especially low. They make good progress throughout the school to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils generally attain more highly in mathematics than in reading and writing, but pupils' work shows that boys and girls of all abilities continue to achieve well in all three of these areas of learning. The focus this year on 'Exciting Writing' has already had a positive impact on the pupils' work in literacy. Even so, there is scope for further

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building on this by extending similar principles to the writing pupils undertake as part of their topic work. Pupils who in literacy remember to start their sentences with capital letters and end them with full stops, do not punctuate their work as reliably in other subjects, when, for example, they are not pressed to check the accuracy of their writing. The school has had remarkable success in raising the attainment of its many vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' individual learning needs are identified at a very early stage, often from the start of their time in the Nursery. The support that these pupils are then given enables them to make often impressive progress. The excellent arrangements for pupils' welfare also helps pupils to grow in confidence and to become enthusiastic learners who listen well to their teachers and work sensibly, individually and with each other. Pupils, including those from different backgrounds, get on well together and they enjoy the taste they are given of responsibility, for example as school councillors and friendship monitors.

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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of the detailed assessment records

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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for each child to plan activities for them that are closely matched to their different needs. Learning support staff are very well deployed to provide extra help to those that need it. Good use is also made of the various adult volunteers who come in to school regularly, including a number of governors who frequently help out in class. Teachers manage their classes well. This, and the consistent approach to behaviour management across the school, creates a calm and stable environment where even those pupils with troubles at home are able to settle quickly and to make swift progress in their learning. The pupils respond especially well to those lessons which proceed at a brisk pace and where activities are varied. Some pupils' attention drifts on those occasions when they are expected to listen passively for a long time or where too long is allowed for an activity.

Pupils are very well motivated because they like their teachers but also because the school provides them with a stimulating environment and a curriculum that captures their interest and enthusiasm. For example, their experience of all spending a week dressed in Victorian outfits and sampling school life as it might have been more than a century ago, has really helped to bring history to life for them. The outdoor facilities are if anything even more exciting for the pupils as those in the building. In common with other Essex schools, there is a 'trim trail' promoting exercise and fitness, and for the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a uniquely designed outdoor area that offers a huge stimulus to the children's imagination, enabling them to explore distant planets and an undersea world.

The excellent arrangements for pupils' care and welfare contribute to the good progress made by all, and the especially rapid progress made by those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. 'Bubble time', for example, offers the opportunity for pupils to share any worries they might have and to benefit from the sympathetic guidance of staff. The school has worked particularly hard to emphasise to parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. These efforts have succeeded in drastically reducing avoidable absence, which is in turn contributing to pupils' good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders, governors and staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. They have worked successfully to create a stimulating curriculum and learning

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environment for their pupils. Considerable energy has been invested in demolishing the barriers to achievement faced by many of their pupils, and so ensuring equality of opportunity for even the most vulnerable. Much effort has been devoted to involving parents more in supporting their children's education. Again, the signs of impact of this are evident in pupils' improved attendance. Leaders' monitoring has helped ensure consistent approaches across the school to behaviour management and an equally consistent diet of good teaching. The school is in the process of developing plans to increase the involvement of other school leaders in monitoring lessons, but to date this has mainly been done by the headteacher.

Governors play an active part in the life of the school. They visit regularly and so are not just dependent on staff for their knowledge of what happens in class. They readily admit, however, that they are not always assiduous enough in formally recording details of their visits. Governors can point to practical examples of where they have challenged school leaders, and they have helped to ensure that the school has first-rate systems for ensuring pupils' safeguarding and welfare. Child protection arrangements and risk assessments are comprehensive, and school leaders and governors are constantly on the lookout for ideas for improvement for example through the introduction of bright, reflective tabards for pupils and staff to wear when out together on school trips. Greensted works as a harmonious community, with pupils from different backgrounds learning to get on well with each other and to respect different beliefs. They have links with children in a school in France, which includes regular webcam conferencing and which builds on the French taught to pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school has ambitious plans to extend pupils' awareness of the wider world through a 'global awareness week' next term, where each class will focus on learning about a different country and its customs.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school's procedures for working with parents and other professionals mean that all children settle in quickly and happily. Good partnerships with parents enable children to feel confident, secure and safe. The children especially appreciate the school's impressive and highly imaginative provision for the outdoor curriculum, where physical skills and real-world opportunities for play are widely in evidence. The staff cater well for individual learning styles and interests by promoting creative working and sensory awareness. This is achieved through children's planned engagement with stories and structured themes and topics that use books, music, counting using motor skills, numeracy and information and communication technology. There are opportunities for free-flow play for younger children that equally support their growing independence and co-operation which helps them to build friendships. In the Reception classes, children were observed to respond to the Going on a Bear Hunt story through writing, crafts and acting out scenes in the school hall, as well as using video cameras in groups in the outdoor garden area to create their own storylines. In all classes, children work towards suitable and challenging personal goals and targets and these are carefully defined by the staff's systems for ongoing assessment. The children make good progress in all six of the areas of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes, due to the consistently good quality of leadership and management and teamwork with the whole school. Their communication and language skills remain below average by the end of the Reception Year, but their mathematical development is above that expected for their ages.

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

Only a very small proportion of parents completed the inspection questionnaire. Governors believe that this may well be because the school has only recently surveyed parents' views with a similar questionnaire of its own, and to which three times as many parents responded. Of the parents who returned the inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority express positive views. Some parents voice concern over the management of behaviour at the school. Inspectors found behaviour to be consistently

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good and found evidence that those pupils who join the school with challenging behaviour are managed well and helped to develop much greater self-control. In the school's own recent survey of parental views, behaviour was not raised as a significant concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greensted Infant School and Nursery 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	71	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	71	4	19	1	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	43	9	43	1	5	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	48	9	43	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	52	9	43	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	38	12	57	0	0	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)	5	24	12	57	3	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	48	10	48	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	33	9	43	4	19	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	33	13	62	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	48	11	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	52	8	38	1	5	0	0

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 pupil's 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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greensted Infant School and Nursery, Basildon, SS14 1RX

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to visit you. I am writing to tell you that you go to a good school where the staff take very good care of you so that you feel very safe. The help and support you get from your teachers and the other staff help you all to make good progress from the start of the Nursery all the way through to the end of Year 2. For some of you, especially those who need extra help with your learning, the progress you make is outstanding.

You are so keen on school because your teachers make it such an exciting place to be and give you such interesting experiences. We were impressed with the thoughtful comments some of you wrote after you spent a day last term seeing what it is like coping with a disability. You listen well in class, but we could see that sometimes some of you get a little restless when lesson introductions are long or when you have too much time for the work you are given. This is something that we have asked the school to look at, so that you are all always learning at a brisk pace.

We were delighted to see how well behaved you are and the way you help each other and get on together. You are growing up as confident young people. You are now often checking your own and each other's writing in literacy using the VCOP success criteria. We would like you now to make your work even better by taking similar care to check that you always remember your capital letters, full stops and other punctuation when you are writing in other subjects. We have also asked your teachers to give you the same helpful pointers when marking other subjects that they give you in literacy and your 'Exciting Writing'. Like many places, Basildon has its own local dialect, but you need to be able to distinguish this from more formal 'standard English', particularly when you are writing. We have asked teachers and support staff to take special care to give you examples of this.

Thank you again for making us so welcome.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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