

Great Bowden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120145
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339614
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Bob Roberts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Trotter
Headteacher	Stefanie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection pupils in Years 5 and 6 were on a residential visit and this reduced opportunities to observe learning. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four teachers, spoke to parents and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of meetings, school policy and planning documents and 34 replies to the parent and carers' questionnaire.

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

achievement and standards, particularly in writing and mathematics

- the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of pupils
- the quality of care, guidance and support in order to judge whether to support the school's own evaluation
- the impact of the headteacher and other leaders and managers on improving provision and outcomes for pupils?

Information about the school

This small school serves the village of Great Bowden. Nearly half of the pupils travel to the school from other areas. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Award, Artsmark Silver, and the Activemark for school sport.

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

This is a good school which has improved since its last inspection. The headteacher has effectively engaged all those involved in the school's work to make improvements in key aspects of provision. As a result, pupils make good progress overall in their academic achievement and their personal development. Progress in reading is especially good.

Provision has improved in two key areas: a revised curriculum, introduced in January 2009, is derived closely from the school's underpinning Christian ethos and new values statement; the quality of care and support has also improved with rigorous attention being paid to all aspects of health and safety and pupil welfare. As a consequence of these developments, pupils' personal development is significantly improved in several respects. In particular, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now outstanding.

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 they achieve well to reach above average standards. This is because the quality of teaching is good overall, although not consistently so across the school. The school recognises that a greater emphasis on children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is required to help the children make even better progress. Since the last inspection the school has worked effectively to improve the progress pupils make in English. Consequently, standards in English in 2009 were exceptionally high.

Leadership and management at the school have been effective in raising attainment and improving aspects of pupils' personal development. Governors are well led and share in shaping the school's future. Parents and staff are very supportive of the leadership and management. Staff are involved in developments such as the new curriculum and improvements in teaching have raised standards. The school's own self-evaluation is accurate and its capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the school by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn from first hand experiences
 - sharing and extending existing good teaching practice across the school
 - extending the use of assessment to support learning, especially in science.
- Improve the rate of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - focusing more sharply on what children are expected to learn

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- engaging children more successfully through lively, purposeful teaching.



Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start Reception with skills and knowledge that are at least those expected for their age, although with such small numbers this varies from year to year. As pupils move through the school they make good progress overall. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and are currently above average. Standards in reading are particularly high and standards in writing have improved substantially as a result of concerted attention to improving writing skills in the school. Progress in mathematics is also improving due to well targeted intervention strategies. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make good progress. Pupils develop skills, confidence and attitudes that will serve them well and their overall achievement is good.

Pupils spoke articulately of their enjoyment of lessons. The work in their books shows that they try hard and take a pride in their work. Attendance is above average and behaviour is good. Spiritual development in this church school is outstanding. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities to think and reflect during the philosophy sessions on Wednesdays and making contributions to arrangements for collective worship, both in school and in the local church. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is also outstanding. Pupils demonstrate a real empathy with those less fortunate than themselves in other parts of the world whilst at the same time articulating a firm belief in human equality. They understand extremely well what it is to live healthily. They feel completely safe in what they describe as the family atmosphere of the school. Through an active school council they feel that their voice is listened to. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to contribute to the local community and to take responsibility in the life of the school, such as the worship teams, school food consultancy groups, and the group managing the school savings bank. Through their strong achievement, good attendance and developing skills and understanding of the world, they have a secure base from which to be successful in the next stage of their education and beyond.

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

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Overall the quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is best, tasks engage pupils in first hand experiences and are well matched to their abilities. For instance, good planning ensured that writing tasks stemmed from a local history visit. Enjoyable experiences are provided and the school has improved the teaching of mathematics, with special projects that integrate mathematical learning to stimulating activities, such as working out a business plan for a theme park. Teachers develop good relations with pupils and include a variety of activities in their planning. Teaching assistants benefit from regular opportunities for professional development and support pupils well. Targets for pupils to work towards are used and displayed. There are good opportunities for pupils to use computer technology, helping the development of independent learning. Teachers have worked effectively to sharpen their assessments of pupils' work in English and mathematics. The next stage identified by the school is to develop and extend the use of assessment to support learning in science

Careful thought and planning has gone into the introduction of a new curriculum framework. Although it is too soon to judge the full impact of this work, there is already evidence of its benefits for pupils. Curriculum plans for good links between subjects, for example, links seen between a local history visit to Rockingham Castle and subsequent writing tasks, engaged pupils' interest and developed their skills well. The school's recently re-developed values underpin this new framework and implement a commitment to promoting community cohesion that clearly improves pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Special features, such as half-termly 'Community and Religious Education Week' are substantially developing pupils' sense of the world in which they live.

Good arrangements are in place to support and care for pupils and to help them develop and learn. The ethos of the school is very much to develop the whole child and the school does this effectively in a range of ways. There are excellent partnership arrangements with other schools and providers to support pupils entering and leaving the school. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is effective in the mixed-age class. Pupils are helped to make responsible choices and to learn about safety through a range

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of planned information sessions. Carefully targeted interventions support pupils with additional needs to make good progress. Where necessary, the school works effectively with external support agencies. School attendance was affected by swine flu in the Autumn of 2009 but, overall, effective steps are being taken to raise attendance rates. The school has responded well to parental requests for better guidance on supporting learning through termly curriculum leaflets, more regular reporting on progress and more accessible types of homework for parents to support pupils with.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, appointed just before the last inspection, has effectively taken the school forward. All those associated with the school have been involved in drawing up the new vision statement: 'Inspire, Believe, Learn, Achieve'. This vision has a real impact on decisions and developments, such as the recently introduced curriculum framework. It forms the basis for the social and moral ethos of the school, one in which equality and tolerance are central, and which clearly influences the personal development of pupils. Excellent partnership arrangements contribute to the improved care and support for pupils. The progress of individual pupils is carefully monitored and prompt, effective action is taken, where appropriate, to ensure that no one is falling behind. Safeguarding procedures are given a high priority and are effective. Many aspects of pupils' personal development have improved as a result, such as their understanding of health and their sense of safety. In line with the school's Christian ethos, the promotion of community cohesion through the curriculum has become a key priority. The school's implementation of these plans, through, for example, links with other schools in this country and abroad, and the focus on the theme of 'Who is my neighbour?' throughout the Community and Religious Education Weeks, is exceptional, and the impact is evident in pupils' attitudes. Personal outcomes for pupils have improved and strong leadership has resulted in improved teaching of writing and mathematics. Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors support the school well, work hard to respond to parents, and are committed to evaluating their own effectiveness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge broadly typical of those expected for their age. The current group are a strong cohort making satisfactory progress in almost all areas of learning, with creative development being somewhat weaker than other areas. Some children are making good progress. Relationships between adults and children are good and because of the nurturing environment created by staff. Children are confident individuals who are keen to learn; they behave well. Children feel safe and have frequent opportunities to join in child-initiated learning which arise from more directed activities planned by staff. Staff are well-deployed and planning for literacy and numeracy is good, providing structured opportunities for children to develop understanding and skills in reading, writing and number work. Planning for other areas of learning is satisfactory. In lessons, children's attention and progress are satisfactory but they are not always sufficiently focused on what they are learning because lessons lack a clear sense of purpose and energy. Children are provided with fruit and parents say they are happy with the care their children receive. Parents feel that communication between the school and themselves is good. The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Adults work well together and staff are targeted effectively to meet children's needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage manager has identified that creative development and problem-solving are areas for development.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very positive in their support of the school. A high proportion of parents returned the questionnaire. There were very few concerns expressed. A small minority of parents felt that the school does not give them sufficient help in supporting their children's learning. This is an issue that had emerged from a school survey earlier in the year. Inspectors considered a series of steps recently taken by the school to address the issue and judged them to be a good response. It was clear from the comments on the questionnaire that parents and carers have a high regard for the leadership and management of the school and are very happy with the experience the school offers their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Bowden Church of England 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 91 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	65	10	29	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	26	22	65	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	38	17	50	4	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	47	16	47	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	38	13	38	7	21	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	44	19	56	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)	9	26	14	41	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	35	17	50	4	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	29	18	53	4	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	38	14	41	4	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	50	15	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	47	15	44	3	9	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.



15 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Bowden Church of England Primary School, Market Harborough,
LE16 7HZ

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all I would like to thank you for the way in which so many of you greeted and spoke to us.

Great Bowden is a good school. It is a better school than it was at its last inspection. This is a credit to everybody who works there and all those involved with it. The school is a very safe, caring place which you enjoy going to. Your attendance is good and you behave well. There are some excellent ways in which it helps you develop, such as your understanding and appreciation of the world around. You make good progress and achieve standards that are better than similar schools. Your reading is particularly strong. The school is helping you prepare for the next stage of your lives well.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. The two things we have asked them to do are:

- ensure that the teaching and learning are good in all classes
- make sure that in Reception everyone is firmly concentrating on what children need to learn.

You can play your part in helping the school to improve by continuing to help each other and show the same positive attitudes you have now.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector

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