

Greenway First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117276
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379386
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth O'Reilly and Lorna Ginn
Headteacher	Katharine Weston
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2007
School address	Crossways Berkhamsted HP4 3NH
Telephone number	01442 866249
Fax number	01442 874252
Email address	admin@greenway.herts.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 13 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, school policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 142 parents and carers, 83 pupils and 17 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by boys and girls in writing and in numeracy.
- The effectiveness of teaching to help more-able pupils to maximise their potential.
- The strategic effectiveness of the governing body in challenging school performance and driving improvement.

Information about the school

Greenway First and Nursery School is a larger-than-average school of its type. It has a well-above-average proportion of girls. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy Schools status.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school which makes a considerable difference to the lives of the young people in its care. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey are highly supportive of its work.

The school has consistently maintained its outstanding levels of performance in key areas over a number of years. Children enter the school with basic skills that are generally in line with the levels expected nationally for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school, at the end of Year 4, is high and progress continues to be good. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because of the thoughtful and effective additional support programmes provided by the school. Behaviour is good and attendance is outstandingly high. Pupils feel very safe in school and their understanding of, and participation in, healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their contribution to the school and the wider community. Pupils are prepared for the next stage of their learning exceptionally well.

Teaching is good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Good pace and challenge, varied and stimulating activities and good use of assessment characterise the most effective lessons. There remains, however, a small amount of satisfactory teaching, where opportunities are missed to stretch the higher-ability pupils to their maximum. The curriculum is outstanding, providing pupils with stimulating experiences and opportunities to learn about the world. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, reflecting the high levels of commitment and skill amongst the staff.

The leadership and the management of the school are outstanding. Self-evaluation is firmly established and accurate. Leaders at all levels are very effective and are continually seeking to improve further. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers and uses a wide range of organisations well for the benefit of the pupils. Leaders continue to secure exceptional outcomes for pupils, and this demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers consistently set appropriate challenges for all pupils, particularly the more-able pupils, so that they all reach their maximum

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potential.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The work seen during the inspection confirmed that attainment is consistently high for both boys and girls, and achievement is outstanding because learning is good or better in the vast majority of lessons. In these lessons, pupils are well-engaged as a result of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. For example, in a Year 2 class in dance, pupils were constantly challenged to think and act on their thoughts, concerning the theme of 'fireworks'. The pupils discussed, choreographed and evaluated their performances, applying analytical processes of the highest order. The vast majority of pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills well. They are keen to succeed and work at a good pace in lessons. They have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the classroom.

The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Well-focused support from staff is enhanced by the effective use the school makes of outside specialised agencies such as the visual impairment team and more general counselling services which give support and advice to both pupils and their parents and carers. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because of high-quality literacy support. The more-able pupils make good progress overall, but do not always have the opportunity to complete work at the higher levels they are capable of.

Pupils very much enjoy their learning. Their healthy lifestyles are facilitated by a wide choice of healthy lunches, together with an extensive range of sporting activities and clubs that pupils attend in large numbers. Pupils are proud of their school and play an important part in its success. They are involved in the Eco-council and they help run the Fair Trade Shop. Such experiences, together with their high attainment in core skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, mean that pupils are extremely well prepared for their future economic well-being. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in the warm, cooperative and friendly atmosphere within the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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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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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, but is typically good. In the small number of satisfactory lessons, teachers talk too much and activities are not always closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Occasionally, in the satisfactory lessons, the more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. In the best lessons, pupils are quickly engaged in their own learning and are challenged. They find this stimulating and exciting, and this leads to their good progress. Assessment systems are used well to track the progress made by individuals and specific groups of pupils, but ongoing assessment of progress during lessons is not always effective.

The curriculum provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning. For example, Year 4 pupils were animated in discussions when working on their current topic of 'volcanoes', which links a range of subjects together. The 'creative curriculum' skilfully combines a range of subjects and further provides opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through a thematic and topical approach. Dance makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, physical and social development. Other outstanding aspects of the curriculum are found in the very wide range of opportunities for enrichment. Trips and visits are significantly enhanced by the use of external specialists in music and sports. In particular, Year 4 pupils learn to play the cornet as part of the 'Wider Opportunity' scheme. Pupils spoke highly of their enjoyment in learning an instrument.

The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. It is very well targeted for all pupils, with specific intervention groups overseen by the highly effective coordinator. It is underpinned by extensive tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment, and extensive links with parents and carers. Case studies demonstrate very strong links with local partnerships and specific work that effectively supports and develops individual pupils. The effectiveness of support staff is typically good, and where they challenge the students to be more independent and think for themselves, it is often outstanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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?

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body are highly ambitious and very effective in promoting high standards. The success of their efforts is clearly evident when meeting the pupils and seeing them at work and play throughout the school. The school has highly developed and very effective systems for monitoring the quality of its provision and of pupils' outcomes. The outstanding governing body is actively and effectively involved in the strategic development of the school and has achieved an excellent balance between monitoring, challenging and supporting the school's leaders. Leaders at all levels are determined that, despite the school's high standards, there is no complacency.

The school's good procedures for tackling all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities ensure that all groups are enabled to achieve well. The procedures for safeguarding are good. The school is particularly robust in taking safety precautions to secure the school site, especially where it has an open access to another school that is immediately adjacent. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is aware that its pupils are predominantly from families of White British heritage, and ensures that they know of and respect different cultures. For example, within the theme of 'festivals of light', pupils study Diwali, Eid and Chanukah as well as Christmas. Relationships with parents and carers are outstanding and the school is highly regarded in the local community. The school's use of its resources and facilities to produce high-quality outcomes for its pupils is testimony to its provision of outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily into the safe environment of both the Nursery and Reception classes. This is helped by the good induction arrangements and excellent welfare provision. A good focus throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage on developing children’s language skills ensures that they quickly become articulate and prepares them well for dealing with the more formal curriculum in Year 1. Children’s learning is recorded well, and the resulting information is used well to inform the next stages in their learning. Children make good progress because of good teaching in an environment which caters well for their needs. Teachers plan a good range of activities with a good balance between those they direct and those the children choose for themselves. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children’s learning and progress.

Children play and work well together because of the clear guidelines and routines given to them by staff. The outdoor learning area is well resourced and the recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is integrating it effectively into the other provision. Leadership and management are good. Staff training is up to date and welfare and safeguarding requirements are met well. Children are prepared well for the next phase of their learning.

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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires are very happy with all aspects of the school. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children, and that it is led and managed well. One of the many statements in praise of the school typifies the views put forward by parents and carers: ‘It has been fantastic to see my children develop and grow in confidence. This is because the school is child focused, and all staff are approachable and caring. The headteacher’s ethos of praise and encouragement has cascaded to all staff. As a result my children are both happy and are learning at

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school.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenway First and Nursery 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 inspector received 142 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 293 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	111	78	31	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	122	86	20	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	65	46	68	48	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	51	60	42	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	86	61	53	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	73	51	55	39	10	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	93	65	47	33	1	1	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)	89	63	40	28	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	81	57	56	39	2	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	52	57	40	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	71	50	64	45	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	114	81	24	17	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	112	79	26	18	4	3	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenway First and Nursery School, Berkhamsted HP4 3NH

Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors when we visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We very much enjoyed being in your school, visiting your lessons and listening to what you had to say. Many of you told us that you like your school very much and believe that you go to a 'smashing' school. We are pleased to say that we agree with you, but we use the word 'outstanding' to describe what we think about your school!

Lots of things we saw in your school helped us come to that judgement. We especially liked the friendly atmosphere and the excellent way in which staff take care of you so that you feel safe and happy. You behave well in lessons and around the school, and work hard. You know all about the importance of staying healthy and keeping safe. We judge that most teaching is good, which helps you make good progress, and of course, your results in tests and in class-work are very high.

There is just one thing which we have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do to make your school even better than it is now. We have asked them to ensure that:

- all your lessons always make you work to the very best of your ability, especially those of you who are capable of learning quickly.

Of course, this means that you have to think carefully and work hard right through to the end of the lessons, but you told us that you like school best this way.

Thank you again for being so helpful when we inspected your school. It was really good to find you are happy and doing well. I know that you will continue to work hard and enjoy lessons as you have done this year. Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Cohen
Lead inspector

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