

# Great Bridge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	103915
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	376990
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	458
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Patel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Regan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Mount Street Great Bridge Tipton DY4 7DE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 557 1526
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376990



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anthony Woodward

Additional Inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty-six lessons were observed, taught by 16 teachers. A number of shorter visits were made to classrooms to gather evidence on specific aspects of pupils' learning. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, particularly that related to pupils' progress and well-being. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and a number of pupils heard reading. Inspectors analysed the responses to questionnaires that were returned by 108 parents and carers, as well as from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Great Bridge is larger than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school includes specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. Known as Focus Provision, this is an assessment nursery providing eight part-time places for children with severe disabilities and complex needs.

The school meets the current government floor standards, which sets minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has won a number of awards including the Sandwell Anti-Bullying Charter Mark.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. The quality of provision and outcomes for pupils, including those in Focus Provision, are good. The school is not yet outstanding because weak provision in the past means that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not achieving as well as other pupils and because the quality of teaching is not outstanding.
- Achievement is good. Children start in the Nursery with skills and experiences that are well below those expected. There has been significant improvement in attainment since the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English and mathematics is at the national average. In Years 5 and 6, each pupil has a learning mentor who encourages him or her to take responsibility for reaching ambitious targets. This accelerates their progress.
- Teaching is good. In the great majority of lessons, teachers plan carefully so that learning is challenging and enjoyable. Pupils enjoy sharing their ideas and working in pairs and groups. Occasionally, whole-class teaching meets the needs of middle-ability pupils more successfully than other groups.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They show respect for each other and the adults who work in the school. Outstanding work by the headteacher and her colleagues help to secure the safety and well-being of pupils facing challenging circumstances.
- Leadership and management are good. The management of teaching performance is rigorous and the actions to tackle weaknesses are resulting in good progress in all year groups. Accurate self-evaluation ensures the school understands its strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders are increasingly accountable for the quality of work in their areas of responsibility. However, reviews of their roles do not consistently evaluate the impact of their work on pupil outcomes or the value for money of strategies they have implemented.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of pupils in Years 3 and 4 by extending the programme of mentoring that is driving improvement in Years 5 and 6.
- Secure a still higher proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
  - during whole-class sessions questions and activities meet the needs of all abilities
  - tasks set for lower-ability pupils are always challenging and encourage independent learning.
- Review planning and evaluation procedures to ensure that:
  - middle leaders can demonstrate the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes
  - the governing body can give a precise account of the value for money of decisions made about the use of resources.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

In the last two years, the academic achievement of pupils has improved because of significant improvements in the quality of teaching. The test results of pupils who were in Year 6 during the last academic year were the best the school has achieved in over five years. The large majority of parents and carers judge that their children are making good progress. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and analyses of data confirm this positive view.

When children start school, their communication skills are particularly weak. To develop these key skills there are daily one-to-one speaking and listening sessions for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. These are securing improving outcomes in communication skills and contributing to gains across all areas of learning. However, despite making good progress, many still have skills below those expected by the time children enter Year 1. In Focus Provision, there is careful assessment of the children's needs and the curriculum is adapted successfully to meet each child's specific needs. One parent commented that their child 'is meeting their targets and learning new things every day'.

Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is at the national average. This represents good achievement given the pupils' starting points. Progress is good as pupils move through the school. Nevertheless, in Years 3 and 4 there is still ground to make up because of weak provision in the past. All groups make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from the care the school takes to tailor the curriculum and activities in

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lessons to provide the right amount of support and challenge. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets because the school has high ambitions of their potential to learn, as well as their successful integration into the life of the school.

Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence of improving attainment in Years 1 and 2 because of the increased time given to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and the actions taken to improve the quality of teaching in this area. Pupils tackle their reading books confidently using their knowledge of phonics to sound out and read unfamiliar words. In Key Stage 2, effective guided-reading sessions contribute to accelerated progress, and pupils reach average attainment in reading by the end of Year 6.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers deliver lessons that take good account of pupils' varying abilities. For example, in phonics lessons the pace of learning is brisk because activities and resources offer challenge for pupils of all abilities, including very effective one-to-one support for pupils with special educational needs. Most parents and carers judge that their children are taught well and inspection evidence supports this view. In mathematics lessons, expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and through skilled questioning, teachers deal very successfully with misunderstandings and inspire confidence in individuals who struggle to grasp a concept.

Teachers take care to develop the collaborative skills of pupils, giving them many opportunities to work together. The quality of writing particularly benefits from this approach, as pupils are very confident giving, and receiving, evaluations of written work. This feature of teaching makes a strong contribution to the development of the pupils' good social skills. The curriculum benefits from strong links between subjects. These give pupils imaginative opportunities to develop skills, such as using tablet computers and making podcasts, as they tackle topics that incorporate a variety of subjects. These topics provide good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and reflect on a range of experiences outside their daily lives. Assessment, target setting and marking of pupils' work are consistently good and enable pupils to have a clear grasp of the next steps in their learning.

Throughout the school, teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the balance of whole-class teaching, small-group sessions and individual tuition that suits them best. Their learning is planned carefully and targets are presented to them in a way that they understand. This helps the pupils to be clear about what they need to do and enables them to measure their own success.

A small minority of lessons lack the pace and drive of the best. For example, during some whole-class sessions, questions and activities only satisfactorily meet the needs of higher- and lower-attaining pupils. In one lesson, the task set for lower-attaining pupils meant that for significant periods of time they were passive as they waited for

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their turn to contribute to a piece of group work. On this occasion, the expectation of what the pupils could achieve independently was too low.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their attendance is above average. Even though a few pupils have social and emotional difficulties, there are very few instances of serious misbehaviour. Pupils who have behavioural problems receive very effective support from qualified staff, including a learning mentor. Their skills, and resources such as a sensory room where pupils can go to receive help to manage their behaviour, have resulted in there being no exclusions from school in over two years. The school tackles bullying in all forms rigorously and deals with prejudiced behaviour through its personal and social education curriculum. Pupils judge that behaviour in the school is good and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree.

Discussions with pupils confirm that, through its curriculum and assemblies, the school successfully develops pupils' awareness of moral issues and their respect for those with cultures, faiths and ethnic backgrounds different from their own. In lessons, pupils consistently show good attitudes to learning and they are friendly and polite around the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, including Focus Provision, children develop self-confidence as a result of the very encouraging way in which adults speak to them.

Pupils are enthusiastic for their responsibilities such as serving on the school council or acting as playground buddies. The school council is effective in gathering the views of pupils and played a key role in the introduction of a pupil-friendly 'Anti-Bullying' policy.

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires agree overwhelmingly that their children are safe in school. Pupils have sensible views about the kind of lifestyles they should adopt and are aware of potential dangers they might face outside of school, including those linked to internet use and cyber-bullying. The school has an exceptionally high proportion of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school's actions to protect these children have been praised highly by the local authority and judiciary.

### **Leadership and management**

Outstanding leadership by the headteacher has been the driving force securing good school improvement since the previous inspection. Her robust challenge of inadequate practice reflects her determination for pupils to receive the best possible start to their education. Assisted by a strong leadership team and governing body, she has inspired a staff committed to raising pupils' achievement. High-quality training for staff has been a main priority. In achieving the current good quality of teaching, leaders have followed up any areas for development identified during lesson observations with appropriate professional development and coaching by the

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school's most effective teachers. As a result of these actions, achievement has risen and the school's capacity to improve further is good.

The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, which allows disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who attend Focus Provision to feel confident and succeed. The school can also demonstrate positive outcomes for the pupils who join Great Bridge following disciplinary problems at their previous schools. The governing body provides good support for the school, particularly in promoting equality of opportunity and opposing discrimination. It is aware of the potential vulnerability of some groups of pupils and holds the school to account for their progress and well-being. Safeguarding measures are firmly in place and fully meet requirements. The governing body is fully involved in decisions about the use of resources but is not able to give a precise account of the value for money of decisions made.

The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In many lessons, there are opportunities for creativity, reflection and teamwork, all of which are very popular with the pupils. The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences, reflected in a number of awards gained by the school.

Above-average attendance reflects the success the school has had in engaging parents and carers more successfully in their children's education. Responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive. One commented, 'I am delighted with how the school cares for and educates my child. He has his "moments" which have been dealt with professionally, assertively and with kindness and support. I cannot fault the school.' A small number of questionnaires raised individual concerns about the school which were shared with the headteacher while protecting anonymity.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Great Bridge Primary School, Tipton, DY4 7DE**

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you, hearing you read and watching you at work in class. Some of the older pupils in the school completed questionnaires. These told us that you enjoy school and that the school deals with any bullying very effectively.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Great Bridge is a good school that is improving.
- Your achievement is good because you make good progress and reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- The teaching you receive is good and quite a few lessons are outstanding.
- The way your school is led and the curriculum you follow are good.
- You behave well in school and on the playground and your school ensures that you are kept safe.

These are two of the things we have asked your school's leaders to do to help you achieve even more:

- raise achievement in Years 3 and 4 by extending the role of learning mentors
- make sure that lessons offer all of you the right amount of challenge and that tasks are neither too easy nor too hard.

All of you can help the school improve further by continuing to attend regularly, behaving well and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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