

Great Heath Primary School

Girton Close, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 7PT

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Over time, pupils make good progress and achieve well across a range of subjects and skills, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, pupils make particularly good progress in reading by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured strong improvement to teaching so that it is now consistently good and promotes good achievement for all pupils.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support pupils for whom this funding is intended so that they make good progress.
- The provision and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are strong and these pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils and staff respect one another and work together to create a calm, purposeful environment. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are happy.
- The headteacher provides clear direction. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and key stage leaders. Together they provide strong leadership.
- The school's self-evaluation is realistic and identifies key areas for improvement. Improving pupils' progress is at the heart of school improvement.
- Governors provide good challenge to the school and are ambitious for high standards of attainment and progress across all year groups.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding in the majority of lessons.
- Marking does not always show pupils well enough how they can improve their work.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 do not have sufficient opportunities to take greater responsibility.
- Many parents are not familiar with what is taught in literacy and numeracy. As a result, parents are not confident to support their children's homework.
- The link between key areas identified in the school's self-evaluation, teachers' professional development and performance targets are not sharp enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons. Six of these observations were completed jointly with the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed breaks, lunchtimes and attended registration and assemblies.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's own survey of parents, which included 49 responses. They also took account of 13 responses to staff questionnaires.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including: samples of pupils' work, pupil-progress and tracking information, the school's raising attainment plan, the school's self-evaluation, governors' minutes, reports from the local authority, behaviour logs, case studies and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed reading-support lessons and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. There are average proportions of pupils from ethnic minorities and below-average proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- One in seven pupils are from service families and, consequently, more pupils than usual leave or join the school during term times.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with the local consortium of primary schools.
- The school moved to the current site during half-term in October 2012. It is the part of the first wave of the schools' organisation review taking place in Suffolk. As a result, current Year 6 pupils are the first year group of pupils educated at the school beyond Year 4.
- The vast majority of Year 6 pupils were away in Norfolk on their annual residential trip during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing the good practice present in the school through joint planning of learning and observation of colleagues' good practice
 - ensuring that marking is consistently good and teachers demonstrate what pupils need to do to improve their work; teachers should also ensure that they provide opportunity for pupils to follow up guidance from marking
 - making greater use of pupils assessing the quality of each other's work so they better understand how to improve it
 - providing more opportunities in all subjects for pupils to use mathematical skills.
- Make behaviour outstanding by providing more opportunities for pupils to take on greater responsibility at Key Stages 1 and 2 so they make further gains in their personal development.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - linking the key points for improvement identified in the school's self-evaluation more sharply to staff-performance targets and planned professional development
 - providing opportunities for parents to learn more about what is studied in literacy and numeracy so they are able to assist their children at home with reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. They make steady progress in Nursery. Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities closer to those expected for their age.
- The Reception class prepares children well for entry to Year 1. Consistently good teaching in Key Stage 1 supports pupils' good progress so that the majority achieve broadly average results. Further good teaching in Key Stage 2 ensures pupils achieve broadly average results in English and mathematics in Year 6. Progress in reading is strong.
- The majority of pupils did not reach the required standard in the reading tests taken in Year 1 in 2012. However, results for pupils retested in Year 2 indicate that these pupils are now secure in their understanding and use of phonics. Teachers and teaching assistants are growing in knowledge and skill and they have become more effective in teaching and choosing appropriate reading materials to support pupils' progress.
- Parents of pupils in Key Stage 1, in particular, are not given enough help and advice with which to support these pupils gain faster appreciation of letters and sounds. Therefore, parents cannot provide additional opportunity outside school for pupils to practise their reading skills daily. Pupils read across a range of subjects and many read as part of homework tasks. Most enjoy reading and show perseverance even when they find reading challenging.
- Across all year groups and subjects, pupils make good progress. In-school information shows that pupils make expected progress, and some make better-than-expected progress, in English and mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils are accurately predicted to make similar levels of progress to 2012, which will continue the steady pattern of improvement evident over the past few years. Progress in writing has often been slower than in mathematics or reading, but improvement in teaching is promoting better progress in writing.
- In 2012, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 eligible for the pupil premium, many of whom joined the school during term time, were better than those of other pupils in the school and better than similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics. The school uses pupil premium funding well to offer individual tuition and small-group classes in literacy and numeracy. School information shows that across the school, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making better progress than other pupils. In Year 6, eligible pupils are currently making, at least, expected progress.
- School information shows that across the school, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make better progress than other pupils because they receive effective help in learning English, which enables them to access the full range of learning opportunities available.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently at least good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully making good use of their subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn to create

lessons that are interesting and enjoyable. Pupils benefit from activities that have been carefully designed to meet their different abilities and make good progress as a result.

- The quality of pupils' writing is improving because of improvements in the teaching of writing from the earliest years. The quality of boys' writing has lagged behind that of girls for some time. The school has worked closely with the local authority to develop writing initiatives that encourage boys to develop writing skills in Nursery and Reception. Initiatives, such as the 'writing wall' for Key Stages 1 and 2, help pupils to display good pieces of writing and receive public recognition and certificates. Many pupils have been motivated to improve their writing and value the opportunity to display it.
 - Teachers and teaching assistants set high expectations for what pupils should achieve. They work well together to plan in-class support and individual tuition to ensure pupils gain knowledge and skills appropriate to their age. Resources engage pupils' interest and support the achievement of learning objectives. Pupils' progress is rigorously monitored each term so that those requiring additional support are identified and provided for.
 - Learning in some lessons is skilfully planned to provide opportunities for pupils to learn through practical experience and discovery. For example, in a combined Years 1 and 2 topic lesson based on the theme 'America Week', teachers combined literacy, numeracy and geography as pupils explored flying to America. Pupils brought suitcases to school and demonstrated enjoyment and enthusiasm as they acquired new vocabulary linked to travel – such as 'terminal' and 'immigration control', as well as geographical awareness of Europe, the Atlantic Ocean and America. By the end of the simulated activity pupils could recall a lot of new knowledge and showed good understanding.
 - Pupils acquire knowledge and develop skills quickly across a wide range of subjects. For example, in a food technology lesson, pupils gained a good appreciation of healthy eating and experimented with creating a healthy snack using freshly prepared ingredients from each of the main food groups. They showed familiarity with food hygiene, worked safely and sensibly, shared equipment fairly, and helped one another to prepare vegetables and clear up. Pupils spoke with confidence and understanding about their learning and the value of healthy eating.
 - Teachers make effective use of questioning to check pupils' learning and encourage reflection. Pupils respond eagerly and provide responses that show good recall and prior learning. Lessons build well on what has gone before. Reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills are taught well. However, pupils do not make faster progress in mathematics because mathematical skills are not taught and practised enough in all subjects.
 - Teachers set and mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. However, the quality of marking is not consistently good and does not reflect the best practice in the school. While teachers identify aspects pupils need to do improve their work, they do not show pupils well enough how it could be done. Therefore, pupils are not always clear about how to make the required improvements. In addition, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to follow up comments and corrections to ensure better progress.
 - In some lessons pupils benefit from the opportunity to assess their own work and that of other pupils. This results in pupils developing a clearer understanding of how they can improve their work. However, this practice is not sufficiently widespread across the school.
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The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is calm and purposeful. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and adults and pupils work together to create an environment of respect, harmony and tolerance. Teachers manage their classes well, including the use of praise and rewards to encourage positive behaviour. Pupils spoke fondly of Fridays' award assemblies, and enjoyed receiving team points.
- Pupils are keen to learn. In lessons, they are respectful and attentive. They follow instructions well, engage enthusiastically with learning activities and they are keen to discuss their work.
- Staff, governors and pupils are proud to be associated with the school and do not express any concerns about behaviour and safety. A tiny minority of parents expressed some concerns about behaviour through the online questionnaire, but conversations with parents and analysis of the school's own survey did not support concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous, and tolerant of diversity. There are a variety of nationalities among the children of local service personnel in the school, and pupils get on well together. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the lunch-time and after-school sports, arts and music clubs. The Year 6 residential trip to Norfolk is something younger pupils aspire to take part in. While pupils have an opportunity to sit on the school council and get involved in decision making about school life, such as the new adventure playground, there are too few opportunities for them to take on positions of responsibility in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Bullying in all its forms is rare. Pupils understand all types of bullying, including physical, racial, cyber and homophobic bullying. They are confident that when bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively by staff. Assemblies, lessons and personal and social development classes ensure that pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe and provide opportunities for reflection and moral growth. Pupils have a good grasp of right and wrong. The school keeps detailed records of all incidents and contacts parents and carers appropriately. Pupils feel safe at school. They are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- Parents of disabled children and children who have special educational needs praised the school for the excellent support it has provided for their children. The school works well with pupils with challenging behaviour so that there has not been any fixed term exclusions over the past two years. Case studies reveal that, over time, behaviour has improved because of the strong partnership between the school, external agencies and families.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to promote better attendance. The school is robust in the strategies it uses to address poor attendance. However, the occupations of some parents involve taking family holidays, occasionally, during term time, adversely affecting attendance. In general, families take a responsible approach and most pupils attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has made good progress with all of the key issues raised at the previous inspection. The school is well led and the headteacher communicates high ambition to staff for better teaching and achievement. He has a clear plan for improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising pupils' attainment as a result of careful school self-evaluation. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders.

- Staff, governors and parents are proud to be associated with the school and demonstrate commitment to planned improvements. However, leaders do not ensure close enough links between the key points identified in the school's self-evaluation, staff-performance targets and planned professional-development opportunities. There is an insufficiently rigorous mid-year review of planned priorities.
 - School leaders worked hard to improve the quality of teaching following the previous inspection. There has been good support from the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Teaching has improved over time so that it is now, at least, good with some outstanding practice. However, there are too few opportunities for teachers to plan lessons together and share good practice as well as observe one another teach. Consequently, best practice in teaching and learning already in the school does not strengthen teaching well enough.
 - Literacy is well taught throughout the school. Pupils make good progress from their starting points to achieve broadly average standards. Writing continues to improve but, rightly, remains a focus for improvement across all key stages.
 - The school's thematic teaching programmes are broad and balanced. There is good awareness of British culture and history as well as those of other countries promoted through the international aspects of study. All groups of pupils have equal access to the learning that the school provides. Lessons promote good moral, social, spiritual and social development and pupils develop values expected of responsible citizens. Visitors attend school regularly to participate in assemblies and lessons. This helps to enrich learning. For instance, a member of the American Air Force led Key Stage 1 pupils in developing basketball skills. Another visitor introduced Years 5 and 6 pupils to a problem-solving activity about travelling on wagon trains in the American Wild West.
 - Communication with parents and carers is good. Inspectors spoke to many parents who were keen to praise the school and felt that their children were happy and making good progress in their learning and development. Some parents are not familiar with the British educational system because they are from overseas. Opportunities to familiarise them with what pupils study in literacy and numeracy are limited. Without a better understanding of subject content, parents cannot assist their children with reading, writing and numeracy homework as well as they say they would like to do.
 - Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
 - Through well-considered policies and effective practice the school strongly promotes equality of opportunity for all. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress.
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■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are ambitious and committed to the school. The governing body has been strengthened recently by new and experienced professionals so it is stronger than at the previous inspection. Governors systematically monitor progress towards achieving the priorities of the school development plan and take responsibility for specific areas. They challenge and support school leaders – particularly the headteacher – holding them to account for the quality of teaching, behaviour and achievement. Governors review pupils' progress and set challenging targets to be reached by the school. They are well informed and have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching and learning. They ensure that only good or better teaching is rewarded by a rise in pay. They are actively involved in managing staff performance. Governors have a clear understanding of what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and its impact on raising the attainment of eligible students.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124562
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402271

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Wheble
Headteacher	Steven Vincent
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2009
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