

# Grendon Underwood Combined School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110278
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288618
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Sinclair

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Hedgecox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Tim Heaton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Grendon Underwood Aylesbury HP18 0SP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 770388
<b>Fax number</b>	01296 770115

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than the average primary school. Approximately one third of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are admitted from neighbouring schools at the age of nine. The school serves an area of comparative advantage, although a few pupils experience social and economic deprivation. Currently, no pupils claim free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. A large majority of pupils are of White British origin with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. English is the home language for all pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Grendon Underwood regards itself as a good school but inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the school as satisfactory. School leaders and managers are committed to raising standards. However, strategies to make improvements are not implemented consistently across the school. They consequently do not make enough impact on standards.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation Stage with well developed personal and social skills. This helps them to settle quickly and reach the goals expected for their age. In Years 1 and 2 effective teaching engages pupils, so that they make good progress and reach above average standards. Although satisfactory, teaching at Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently consistent to ensure that all pupils in different classes are appropriately challenged. Overall standards are above average and progress is satisfactory. However, pupils make more progress in some subjects than others. Progress is good in English, where teachers are using assessment well to match work to pupils' individual needs. However, pupils do not make the progress expected in mathematics where the use of assessment is unsatisfactory. The school provides satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and appropriate arrangements are made with outside agencies to support pupils' needs. The school collaborates well with feeder schools, helping to assess pupils on entry at the age of nine.

The school has identified the need to develop its curriculum to provide more opportunities to integrate subjects into a coherent whole. However, this initiative lacks a whole-school approach to ensure the ongoing development of skills and that the curriculum is fully covered. Curriculum leaders do not always have the skills required to identify areas for whole school improvement. It is yet to be monitored for its impact on achievement and standards. Development plans do not always identify measurable improvements that can be used to gauge their success.

Pupils' personal development is good. They act responsibly, relate well to each other and feel safe and secure. They say that they enjoy school and this is substantiated by their good attendance. A parent commented, 'The school promotes a very happy atmosphere'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Their strong sense of teamwork and commitment to their school community is demonstrated in their participation in school performances.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next Section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure school improvement actions are rigorously monitored and result in the improvements needed to raise standards.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by making full use of assessment information to plan the next steps of learning for individual pupils at Key Stage Two.
- Ensure that curriculum coordinators have the range of skills necessary to bring about school improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although overall standards are above average, progress is satisfactory. When they join the Foundation Stage, most children's personal, social and physical skills are well developed, although their skills in reading, writing and calculating are below the expected level. Children are on course to achieve the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Good teaching in Key Stage 1 helped Year 2 pupils to make good progress and achieve above average standards in 2006 national tests. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, progress slows in Key Stage 2, where there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in different subjects. In 2006, standards were well above average in English. More able pupils achieved particularly well, reflecting a recent initiative to use assessment data to plan the next steps of learning and provide stretching targets for individual pupils. Although test results for eleven year olds in mathematics and science in 2006 were average, the value added by the school was less than the national average. Data analysis during the inspection indicates that pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are not making enough progress in mathematics.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils develop positive relationships and this helps them to behave extremely well. They feel safe from intimidation and bullying and understand that any minor incidents will be addressed effectively by the school. Attendance is high and pupils enjoy school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are developing their awareness of cultural diversity well and enjoy collaborating with each other. Many participate in after-school clubs and are keen to take physical exercise. However, in some lessons, pupils are too passive and do not readily ask questions. Conversely, pupils are ready to initiate their own ideas when given the opportunity. Teamwork is strong and pupils are developing well the skills they require for their future lives. The school council enables pupils to have a good say in significant matters. Pupils make a good contribution to charity work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, warm relationships ensure pupils develop their personal and communication skills, settle quickly and make the progress expected. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, where pupils achieve well. Good relationships encourage pupils to behave extremely well and they are ready to learn. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions. Throughout Key Stage 2 teaching is inconsistent, leading to pupils progressing at variable rates. Pupils make most progress in lessons where they are taught how to learn. Effective lessons are characterised by challenging questioning and pupils' active engagement in tasks well matched to their capabilities. Progress is limited when teachers dominate lessons so that pupils are passive listeners, and where tasks are poorly matched to pupils' capabilities. Occasionally, pupils with learning difficulties are given more support than they require, denying them the opportunity to meet appropriate challenges. Work is marked

regularly, but there is inconsistency in the use of constructive comments to show pupils how they could improve their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Planning sufficiently meets the needs of all pupils except in mathematics at Key Stage 2. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a balance of structured sessions and activities chosen by children. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. In English, their particular needs are often catered for through focused support work. Some opportunities have started for pupils to use and develop their different skills in a topic based approach to learning. This is making learning more enjoyable and purposeful. The school has identified the need to develop its curriculum to provide more opportunities to integrate subjects into blocks of work. A wide range of visits, visitors, and a number of additional activities enrich the curriculum. These add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning and promote their personal and social development. Year 5 enjoyed coming to school in Victorian costume to experience Victorian lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its pupils. There are very clear procedures for health and safety. Policies and procedures to protect pupils are carefully implemented. Staff know their pupils well. Those with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and sufficient provision is made to support their particular needs. Good links with outside agencies help with assessment and planning for the support of these needs. Assessment is used well to monitor pupils' progress in English. Pupils are set literacy targets and understand how these help them to improve their work. Assessment is not used sufficiently to identify the different learning needs of all pupils in other subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher involves governors, staff and parents in making a satisfactory self-evaluation of the school. The school knows its strengths and has identified the needs to extend assessment procedures in different subjects and to develop teaching and the curriculum. Performance data is being used to set more challenging targets for improvement and to identify pupils at risk of underachieving. However, the school has not taken full account of all of the available data in its self-evaluation process. No evidence was available during inspection to compare the progress made by different groups of pupils to identify areas of strength or weakness.

The headteacher conducts regular, focused observations of teaching and learning to identify strengths and areas for development to support individual teachers. However this is insufficient to ensure effective and consistent teaching throughout the school. The curriculum coordinator for English has used classroom monitoring to identify the need to develop assessment procedures. She addressed this through whole school training and support for individual teachers and evaluated its impact on pupils' standards and progress. This showed a marked improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5+ in end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2006. The roles of

other curriculum coordinators are less well developed. They do not always have the skills required to monitor their different subjects, or to identify appropriate cross-curricular links. This limits the school's ability to develop its curriculum to enhance learning and extend assessment for learning.

Governors bring a range of expertise to their roles and are working to enhance communication with parents. They are well informed about the work of the school and provide challenge and support for professional colleagues.

Issues identified in the last inspection have been appropriately addressed. This, coupled with the school's effective implementation of assessment for learning to raise standards in English provides evidence of its satisfactory capacity for improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grendon Underwood Combined School, Aylesbury, HP18 0SP

Thank you for the welcome we received when we came to visit your school. I am writing to tell you what we have found out. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. These are some of the things that are good about your school. You like coming to school and enjoy the after-school clubs. You behave very well in lessons and around the school. You want to do your best and try hard at your work.

These are some of the things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve further:

- we have asked your headteacher to keep a firm check that the improvements the school is making do help all of you to improve
- we have asked your teachers to use what they know about your progress in mathematics to make sure that your work is not too easy or too hard for you
- we have asked your headteacher to help the subject coordinators to have all the skills they need to improve their subjects.

Best wishes,

Mary Sinclair

Lead inspector