

Great Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124562
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293033
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Gillian Smith

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 on roll	
School	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Wheble
Headteacher	Mrs Y Cash
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	St John's Close Mildenhall Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP28 7NX
Telephone number	01638 713430
Fax number	01638 713430

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Great Heath Primary School is average in size. The socio-economic circumstances of many pupils are relatively disadvantaged and skill levels on entry to the nursery are well below average. Eligibility for free school meals and the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is high. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a wide range of other ethnicities is also represented in small numbers. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.

The school has the Basic Skills Award Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education, with some good features; this judgement matches the school's view of its own effectiveness. The headteacher, senior leaders and other adults work closely to make this school a nurturing and safe place for pupils. They have successfully created an environment within which most of the pupils work hard and do their best. Good pastoral care and welfare is reflected in pupils' good personal development, behaviour and improved attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents are equally positive about all aspects of school life, including the progress made by their children.

The good curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well and a particular strength is its increasing creativity. There is a wide range of provision for pupils who have social or learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher increasingly involves staff, governors and parents in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leadership and management are satisfactory, reflecting school leaders' satisfactory knowledge of how well the school is doing. The school has successfully addressed the issues from the previous report, improved pupils' personal development, the curriculum in Years 3 and 4, attendance and pride in their work. The focus on raising achievement is increasingly sharp and reflects the school's good capacity to improve. The school gives sound value for money.

The quality of education provided in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well. Accommodation is good and full use is made of the spacious outdoor area. Standards at the end of Reception year are below average, having risen from a low starting point. Since the last inspection, standards in Year 2 have been largely average. However, in 2006 they dipped sharply and provisional data from the 2007 tests indicates they remain exceptionally low. Work seen during the inspection, however, suggests otherwise. The current standard of work in Year 2 is, in fact, average and the school acknowledges that teachers' assessment of recent tests has in some cases been inaccurate. Overall standards in Year 4 are also average although standards in mathematics, and the progress made during Key Stage 2, are lower than in reading and writing. This sound overall achievement is the result of satisfactory teaching. Although there are some strengths, such as lesson planning, skilled use of interactive white boards and imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT) in art, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking. While some teachers provide clear written feedback to pupils, some do not comment on the standard of work or give specific guidance on how they can improve. There are no differences in the progress made by pupils from minority ethnic groups or those who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The standard of educational guidance is satisfactory. Senior leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and identify anyone who is not making the expected progress. All pupils in the main school have group and individual targets for improvement and most of the pupils know what they have to do to improve in the medium term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of teacher assessment in Year 2, so that information gained more accurately reflects the standards reached.
- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking so that all pupils know how well they have done and how they can improve.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Skill levels on entry to the Nursery are low, particularly in the areas of language and communication and mathematical development. A good curriculum and high levels of support help children to make good progress and, by the end of Reception, standards have risen but remain below national expectations. Areas of relative strength include aspects of children's personal and social development and writing.

Between 2003 and 2005, standards in Year 2 were average. In 2006, they fell sharply because there was a very high level of individual need within the cohort. Provisional data from the recent 2007 tests suggest that standards remain exceptionally low. However, the school believes these provisional assessments are in some cases inaccurate and inspection findings support these concerns; standards seen during the inspection were average and therefore much higher than indicated by the data.

Pupils' achievement and standards in Key Stage 2 are average. However, there are weaknesses regarding pupils' progress in mathematics and this is reflected in below average standards at the end of Year 4. Pupils of all ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily, as do pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

In 2007, the school met its adequately challenging targets and more able pupils exceeded them in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance has improved to average. Their attitudes to learning are good, although some depend too much on the teacher and are reluctant to work problems out for themselves. Pupils say their views are listened to and the school council is effective in bringing about change. Pupils understand the importance of a good diet and regular exercise and know how to stay safe and healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social education. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community and enjoy looking after each other. They are very proud of their achievements and several Year 4 pupils read out their poems that had been published as part of a national competition. Pupils' impressive personal qualities and sound basic skills equip them securely for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and use interactive whiteboards skilfully to capture and hold their attention. Learning intentions are shared effectively and teachers increasingly link subjects into topics that interest pupils and add to their enjoyment. However, some of the marking is inconsistent; while some teachers clearly indicate how well pupils have done and guide improvement, others provide only ticks, with few written comments; this limits pupils'

achievement. In addition, provisional teacher assessments informing the 2007 Year 2 national test outcomes is in some cases inaccurate and does not reflect the true standard of pupils' work.

Thorough lesson planning, effective use of teaching assistants, and appropriate expectations, ensure that pupils of all abilities and ethnicities make satisfactory progress. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and, as a result, provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum includes an appropriate focus on developing basic skills and meets pupils' needs well. Good links with the Network Learning Community are helping to reinforce basic skills and a strong focus on broadening the curriculum contributes to pupils' good personal development and enjoyment of learning. Provision for pupils with particular gifts and talents is satisfactory and talented mathematicians attend master classes organised by the Network Learning Community. Teachers increasingly provide opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills by incorporating them into other subjects, such as art and literacy. A new initiative to give pupils greater opportunities to write at length is beginning to raise standards and a wide range of intervention programmes is improving pupils' basic skills in speaking, reading and writing. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through a satisfactory range of additional clubs, visitors to the school and a successful personal, social and health education programme. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that new pupils, those with learning difficulties, and those with English as an additional language enjoy full access to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A high level of care helps to create a calm and positive environment for learning. All procedures for safeguarding pupils' health and safety and child protection are in place. Pupils feel safe and very well looked after and say their teachers always try to help if they have a particular problem. This nurturing environment successfully fosters pupils' good personal development and puts them in a positive frame of mind for learning. Vulnerable pupils receive particularly good support and this has a very positive impact on their psychological well-being, attitudes to learning and achievement. Close links with the partner middle school helps to smooth pupils' transition into Year 5.

Educational guidance is sound. Teachers provide and implement group targets for pupils of differing ability as well as individual targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy. Despite the problem in Year 2 the school regularly assesses pupils' work and tracks their progress carefully in other year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new leadership team of the established head and two deputies, with the help of experienced subject leaders, has introduced several beneficial initiatives. These have broadened the curriculum and enriched provision but have not yet impacted on standards in national tests. The school

has successfully addressed key issues from the last inspection, with the exception of improving the quality of teachers' marking. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, both through the many intervention strategies to support vulnerable pupils and through actions to promote positive attitudes to difference. Appropriate procedures are in place for managing racist incidents. These actions ensure that this is a very inclusive school. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion by providing family learning groups and participating in national competitions and local events, such as 'Mildenhall In Bloom.'

The school self-evaluation processes are satisfactory and it has a sound view of its main strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive, but do not challenge the school sufficiently in relation to the standards reported at the end of Key Stage 1.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Great Heath Primary School, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7NX

We enjoyed our visit to your school earlier this week and want to thank you for the way you helped us while we were there. We had some interesting discussions with some of you. I want to tell you what we found out about your school and how it can get better in the future.

The things we particularly liked about your school.

- You enjoy school, get on well with each other and behave well.
- You know how to keep safe and healthy.
- Grown-ups take good care of you and help you to feel happy at school so you can concentrate on your learning.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes do especially well.
- Your school works closely with other schools and organisations to make sure you benefit from a wide range of different opportunities and experiences.

We have asked the school to do the following.

- Make sure that teachers assess pupils' achievements in Year 2 more accurately.
- Help pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make faster progress in mathematics.
- Make sure that, when teachers mark your work, they always let you know how well you are doing and how you can improve in the future.

Once again, thank you for your friendly welcome. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Smith

Lead Inspector