

# 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>	308452
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Kirk

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	467
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Patel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Regan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mount Street Great Bridge Tipton DY4 7DE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 571526
<b>Fax number</b>	01215 577436

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 December 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Great Bridge is a large primary school. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds. The majority of children start in the Nursery part-time with skills and experiences that are well below the expected levels. Great Bridge has 'Focus Provision', which is an assessment nursery providing four full-time equivalent (FTE) places for children with severe disabilities and complex needs. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools, including a significant number of pupils with a wide range of moderate learning, behavioural, emotional and social, and speech and language needs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving under the good leadership of the headteacher. She has stimulated in all staff a strong focus on raising standards and in creating a fully inclusive school of which to be proud. Many initiatives have been introduced which have already had a positive impact on various aspects of school life. However, evidence is not available to show a significant impact on standards, which although showing improvement, are still below average in mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with low skill levels. The school builds well on their starting points and most make good progress in all areas of learning because of good provision. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and this too is improving, especially in English. Pupils' progress in mathematics and science is behind their progress in English. Boys in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well as the girls in many areas of learning, although the gap is narrowing.

Parents have a high regard for the school and praise the education that their children receive and the way the school is run. Parents typically say, 'We are delighted with the levels of care and attention given to our child' and 'My son loves being at school.'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but variable across the school. Staff are particularly effective in helping overcome the considerable social, emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by some pupils. When teaching is only satisfactory, it does not have sufficient pace or challenge to enable pupils to make good progress. The curriculum is well planned to engage pupils' interest. It includes many activities and visits to widen pupils' experiences. For example, during the inspection, the Year 5 children took part in a Victorian Day as part of their history project and Year 6 enjoyed a visit to the local chocolate factory. Such activities help to broaden pupils' understanding of the world around them. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although the quality of marking varies between teachers and across subjects. It is most effective in English. Where marking is best, clear success criteria are in place and used effectively by pupils and teachers to aid achievement. Information from regular assessments of pupils' progress is used well to target pupils who are falling behind and in need of additional support. The use of such assessments contributes to the improvement in the achievement of boys. However, the school does not use this information to help target specific initiatives and resources. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and make similar progress to their peers. Displays throughout the school are good and especially reflect the good personal development and well-being.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and the school has achieved its platinum Healthy School Award. They behave well, helped by effective behaviour policies and specialist staff. Pupils are very well cared for and robust safeguarding procedures and effective links with social services are in place and used effectively.

The school has made sound progress since the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the EYFS starting from points well below those expected at this stage. By the time they leave the EYFS, they have begun to close the gap and score close to the national average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Standards in physical development, creative

development and knowledge and understanding of the world are broadly average. Parents recognise and appreciate the support provided by the EYFS in helping them to contribute to their children's development. All staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development well, with the result that children show the ability to sit and concentrate on their tasks to completion. Teaching is good overall and the setting is managed effectively. Assessment is generally used well and this supports the progress children make. The children in the Focus Provision make good progress because activities are well matched to learning as a result of effective regular assessment. The setting provides opportunities for adult- and child-led activities, but progress is restricted, particularly in Reception, by an over-emphasis on adult-directed tasks, some of which lack challenge.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Implement plans to raise standards in mathematics and science, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning so that all pupils make at least good progress.
- Extend the use of assessment information used to monitor pupils' progress, so it can be used by managers to monitor whole-school improvements.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall standards are average. However, there is variation between year groups and between subjects. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards have varied greatly over recent years. In English, standards are now broadly average but in mathematics and science, they are still below. Taking into account pupils' low starting points, achievement is satisfactory overall, but it is uneven because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning between classes and subjects. Too few pupils attain higher levels. Boys, especially in Years 3 to 6, do not achieve as well as their national peers in many aspects of their learning, but this gap is closing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know how to behave well and stay safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although noticeably stronger in moral and social education, where the school has targeted much of its work. Behaviour is good and pupils' work on personal, social and health education supports healthy lifestyles. Pupils are keen to take responsibility as playground buddies and as part of the school's council. Bullying and racist incidents are rare, but when they do occur, staff deal with these effectively. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils contribute to the community through various initiatives, such as litter picking and charity collections. Learners are well prepared for their future economic well-being through the school's Education Business Partnership and through work with Walsall College.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning. Where teaching is good, teachers manage pupils well and work is effectively planned, with a good match to pupils' ability and achievement from previous work. The pace of lessons is brisk and a range of approaches and strategies is used to maintain pupils' interest, especially that of the boys. However, there is too much variability in the quality of teaching between teachers and between subjects. Approximately half of the lessons observed was good, with a small proportion outstanding. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not match questions and activities closely enough to individual pupils' needs. Teachers do not share learning objectives fully with pupils to check their understanding of the intended outcomes and there is insufficient challenge.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The thematic approach that the school uses for its afternoon curriculum has effective cross-curricular links, but does not have effective skills tracking throughout the school. Modern foreign language teaching is a strength of the school and pupils show a high level of language acquisition. There are well-considered visits and experiences to enrich the curriculum. Residential experiences add greatly to pupils' social and emotional development. Unreliable hardware hinders the development of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, the school has plans to address this weakness.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The provision of pastoral care and guidance is exemplary. The school works with a wide range of agencies to support children and families, reflecting the complex needs of the community. It discharges its duties for safeguarding and health and safety with energy and determination and meets the national requirements. The school undertakes a range of strategies to improve attendance, which is broadly average once the high incidence of illness and hospitalisation is taken into account. Punctuality has improved. There were a number of exclusions last year, but the school has worked hard to include pupils with significant behaviour and social difficulties, some of whom have been part of managed moves or excluded permanently from other schools. Where good marking is present, it informs pupils about how to improve their work against learning objectives and success criteria. This is not consistent across the school. Individual curricular targets are not fully developed and so not all pupils are clear on how to improve their work. Care, guidance and support for the Focus Provision in the nursery is outstanding.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

School self-evaluation is satisfactory, as is the school's capacity to improve. The school has correctly identified the need to raise standards, which it has done in English through a series of effective strategies. However, other initiatives are not targeted sufficiently to raise standards in mathematics and science. This is because the use of assessment data does not identify clearly

specific areas of significant weakness. The headteacher's unwavering commitment, drive and determination has a significant impact on the school in many areas. She is supported effectively by senior leaders, who provide increasingly good direction and support for other teachers. The senior management team knows that there has been underachievement in the past and has introduced more rigorous systems to improve progress and hold staff accountable for how well their class achieves. The governing body is supportive and has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Community cohesion is satisfactory, with particular strengths in the school's relationships within the school community.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

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

## 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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

8 December 2008

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work. You and your parents told us that Great Bridge is a happy school and that you enjoy your lessons. We agree. We found the school to be satisfactory overall. That means that it does some things well but it needs to do some things even better to help you to learn faster.

You do well in English and the staff keep a very careful eye on your progress. Your behaviour is good and the staff take special care to make sure that you are well cared for. You know how to stay healthy and have a strong sense of right and wrong.

The youngest children enjoy their start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes and quickly learn about good behaviour and concentration. They make good progress.

These are the things that we would like to see improved.

- The school should design plans to raise standards in mathematics and science, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Your teachers need to continue to improve their lessons so that you all learn as fast as you can.
- Your senior teachers need to extend the use they make of assessment information. This is so they can see well how improvements are working across the whole school.

The headteacher and all the adults are keen to help you do as well as you can. You can help them by keeping up your good behaviour, always coming to school unless you are ill and keeping on working hard, especially in mathematics and science.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector