

Great Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124562
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340599
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Moodie

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 of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Wheble
Headteacher	Mr S Vincent
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 10 lessons, and several parts of other lessons. They held meetings with staff, governors, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's own improvement plans and key documentation concerning safeguarding. The outcomes of 34 parental questionnaires were scrutinised alongside those of the pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how the school promotes boys' attainment
- how leaders are setting the direction for the school's improvement
- how teachers ensure that individual pupils make progress
- how assessment information is used to support improvement.

Information about the school

The school serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. It has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are also more pupils who are eligible for free school meals than average. The school has a Nursery which serves the whole town, and many children attend other schools when they transfer to full time education. The school is the subject of a reorganisation plan, although a final decision has yet to be made.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Under the clear direction of the recently appointed headteacher, the school is improving in many areas. Well planned strategies are in place, and pupils' attainment is beginning to rise. By the end of Year 4, attainment is broadly average in reading and mathematics, but is below average in writing. From the Nursery to Year 4, the school is a calm and welcoming place in which young people can safely learn and develop. Pupils behave well in lessons and at play, and disruption is rare. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils as individuals, and support and care for them well. Pupils are positive about their school and enthusiastically take up the extra-curricular opportunities that it provides for them. The school is establishing increasingly positive relationships with parents and carers.

As a result of effective monitoring and evaluation, teaching has improved recently. Some inconsistencies remain and these are limiting the amount of progress that the pupils make as they move through the school. Reorganisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved children's start to school. This improved situation continues into Key Stage 1 where an effective team of teachers and teaching assistants operate. Progress is slower in Key Stage 2 and as a result pupils do not reach the ambitious targets set for them. Boys consistently perform worse than girls in all subjects, and this is most significant in reading. The school has introduced a highly structured part of each day which concentrates on the teaching of reading, spelling and writing. This is at an early stage of implementation but there is already evidence of individual pupils making considerable progress. The school recognises that teachers are not using assessment information well. This means that pupil progress is not tracked with sufficient rigour, and that too often pupils of different abilities are asked to do the same work. Many pupils are unclear as to what they need to do in order to improve, and the marking of their work is inconsistent. A good and improving curriculum provides pupils with interesting lessons. However, writing is not embedded throughout the curriculum and this limits the opportunities for developing key skills. The school has a large number of teaching assistants who support pupils in a variety of ways. Their carefully planned deployment with specific groups enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress in the school. Where teaching assistants are working with classes, however, their time is not always planned efficiently, and they can spend long parts of a lesson listening to a teacher.

The school has a clear and accurate view of its own performance. The current leadership team has put effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the recently introduced changes. Comparison with national data indicates that attainment has improved over the past three years, and pupils' work is showing marked improvements

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in mathematics. The school's capacity for sustaining this improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - rigorously tracking the progress of all pupils and acting swiftly to address any underachievement
 - narrowing the gap between boys and girls by ensuring that boys receive appropriate support
 - providing exciting and engaging opportunities for pupils to write in a range of subjects other than English.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making effective use of assessment and marking so that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve
 - providing work and tasks that are matched to pupils' abilities during all stages of lessons
 - making more consistently effective use of teaching assistants at the beginning of lessons.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are below those typical of children entering Nursery. By the end of Year 2, attainment has improved and is slightly below average. School data and analysis of pupils' work indicate that recent improvements in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have not been sustained, although attainment in reading and mathematics continues to improve. At the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations for mathematics and reading, but writing remains stubbornly below. The school recognises the urgent need to improve writing. The recent strategies that have been put in place have not yet had time to impact on pupils. Higher attaining pupils have not performed as well as their national counterparts in the past. This year more of these pupils are making good progress in mathematics in Year 2. This is the result of good planning that is well matched to the pupils' different abilities. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in lessons and are keen to contribute and ask questions. They respond enthusiastically to lessons which require them to think and be active. In these lessons pupils make significant progress and are proud of their outcomes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the very well structured support that the school provides.

Pupils are secure in the school and feel safe. The older pupils are confident that they

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can seek help from any adult in school. Pupils are also very supportive of one another. The school is a health conscious place and pupils make sensible choices at lunchtimes; they are very aware of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and can explain the benefits of exercise. The school has a clear plan to increase its contact with the local community, and events such as singing at the local church when the Christmas lights are turned on have begun to occur. A gardening club, involving members of the local community, is at an early stage of development. Pupils understand the importance coming to school, and their attendance levels are average. They behave respectfully in school and relationships between pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive. An example of this is when pupils enter and leave the assembly hall impeccably and without the need of staff supervision. Pupils have a sound understanding of right and wrong, and apply this in their interactions with their friends and with staff. Their understanding of different cultures in the UK and abroad is under-developed, but a well-planned programme of trips and visits is beginning to increase awareness of their national identity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Whilst teaching has improved recently, inconsistencies remain which limit its impact on pupils learning. The use of assessment information to support pupils' improvement is limited, and too many pupils are unclear about what they need to do in order to progress. Marking is inconsistent, and often does not identify weaknesses in understanding. In some classes however, teaching is quickly improving and is good or better. Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in these lessons because the teachers have carefully planned work that is matched well to the varying needs of the pupils. Briskly paced teaching and good questioning keeps pupils interested and keen to contribute. This is in contrast to other lessons, where teaching is less lively, progress is slow and pupils' concentration drifts. Some very effective teaching occurs when teaching assistants are deployed productively with groups of pupils from the start of lessons. This has a very positive impact on the progress of these pupils. In less effective lessons, the teaching assistants sit with the pupils and listen to the teacher for too long.

There are a series of well-managed and successful intervention groups which focus on pupils with specific needs. These help to create a good curriculum which is carefully planned and meets the needs of the pupils. A growing number of trips, visits and visitors are making life at school more motivating for pupils. During the inspection a Christmas CD was being recorded, and pupils were very excited to be part of a whole-school musical project. Outside school hours, pupils are keen to take part in the many sporting activities which are on offer. Teachers are working hard to find opportunities for pupils to write in a range of different subjects, although this is a recent development and has yet to yield results. Good and imaginative use is made of computers by teachers and pupils, and some of the computer based art work displayed around the school is of a high standard.

Good guidance and support are provided for pupils as they move through the school. Transition from the Nursery to the main school and from Year 4 to the middle school is carefully managed. The school works effectively with outside agencies to support pupils and their families and this helps to create strong partnerships with parents and carers. Support staff are well led and are an asset to the school, working in a wide range of roles - often in response to an individual pupil's needs. There are examples of individual pupils making significant progress because a need has been identified and support has been quickly and thoughtfully allocated.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

How effective are leadership and management?

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The recently appointed headteacher has had a very positive impact on the school. His clear vision and determined ambition for the pupils are shared by staff and pupils. High expectations are combined with an effective improvement plan which sets out the route to improvement in a very straightforward manner. The headteacher is well-supported by a senior management team which has been reorganised to meet the current needs of the school. This team is committed to school improvement and is harnessing commitment across the school. The school's leadership recognises that it is too early to see the impact of their recent work, all of which has been in response to a careful and insightful range of self-evaluation processes. Inspectors agree with the school's own view of itself, and have identified very similar areas where improvement is needed. Senior staff monitor and evaluate the school's work and set realistic targets for improvement, sometimes seeking external support to help them. Teaching is managed well and is improving strongly in many parts of the school. Assessment data have been assimilated, and this is now allowing leaders to track the progress of all groups of pupils as well as individuals. Important messages about the under-performance of boys have arisen from this data, and the school has responded with an action plan. The school works effectively to promote equality for its pupils, and it is active in challenging and addressing discrimination on the rare occurrences where it arises.

The governing body has also been through a period of change, and there are several recently appointed members who are new to the role of governor. All statutory requirements are fulfilled, and the governing body provides satisfactory levels of challenge and support for the school. The governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a small number of governors are involved in the daily life of the school. Procedures for safeguarding are securely in place, and appropriate staff training has been completed. Pupil welfare is taken very seriously and the school has good systems for working alongside other agencies to protect and support pupils. Links with home are increasingly strong, and parents are very positive about the school and, in particular, the new head teacher. As one parent wrote, 'He is really involved and I feel that I can approach him if I ever have a problem'. This is a common feature amongst parents, who value the ease of access that they have to the school. The school is building links with other partners and promoting community cohesion satisfactorily. Whilst local links are growing, national and international awareness is currently limited. An effective approach to the development and evaluation of this area is in place. There are well-defined financial procedures, and the school is working well to plan for the future and potential change.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	<p>3</p>

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below age related expectations. They make satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage but language and numeracy skills remain low by the time they enter Key Stage 1. More progress is made in the area of personal development, and very important social skills are learned so that children are prepared well to learn as they move through the school. Recent changes to staffing and organisation are proving successful, and the local authority has provided effective support for this area of the school. As a result, teaching has improved and children learn in a motivating and exciting environment. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities and good use is made of the outdoor areas. This allows children to learn to make their own choices, and supports growing independence. The change in leadership has generated a good deal of enthusiasm and ambition amongst the staff, and improvements are already apparent. For example, assessment information is being used more effectively to track children's progress and plan their next steps. Children are well looked-after in a safe and nurturing environment, where their needs are the priority for all staff. Parents and carers are welcomed and supported and many comment on how approachable and helpful the staff are.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the school. A few disagreed that the schools deals effectively with

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unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found nothing to substantiate this view during the inspection. Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents during the inspection, all of whom endorsed the positive views of those who returned the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Heath Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	47	17	53	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	56	13	41	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	53	15	47	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	63	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	53	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	59	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	50	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	41	13	41	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	41	15	47	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Heath Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 7NX

Thank you very much for making Mr Jarvis and myself so welcome in your school. We valued the time that you spent talking to us and filling in questionnaires. This really helped us to find out about your school. I would like to share our findings with you.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

Mr Vincent has a very clear idea of how to make things better, and he is very well supported by the senior leaders in school.

There have been lots of changes since Mr Vincent arrived in the spring. It is too early to see how well many of them are working but there are clear signs that things are improving.

You behave well in school and are kind to each other. You know what is right and wrong and cooperate well in lessons.

The staff, and in particular the teaching assistants, are good at helping pupils who need extra support.

We have asked the school to keep a very close check on how well you are doing. We would like them to make sure that the work you are given is just right for you, and that you know what to do so that you can help yourself to improve.

Everyone at the school needs to work hard to make your writing better. You can play your part by working really hard at this important skill.

I hope that you will work hard with your teachers so that the school can improve as much as Mr Vincent wants it to. I wish you the very best of luck in your futures.

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie

Lead inspector

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