

Great Kingshill Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110431
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310300
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Ellert
Headteacher	Mr R Dodds
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Cryers Hill Road Cryers Hill High Wycombe HP15 6JP
Telephone number	01494 713159
Fax number	01494 718239

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement and personal development
- the quality of teaching
- the care, support and guidance provided for pupils, particularly in monitoring their progress
- how well the school is led and managed.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and break-times; talking to pupils and staff; checking the school's records of pupils' progress and the results of questionnaires returned by parents and pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school in a semi-rural area. Pupils are mostly of White British origin, with a few from a range of minority ethnic groups. Pupils' social and economic circumstances are better than those usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Few pupils have a home language other than English, and virtually all are fluent in speaking English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Great Kingshill is a good school with several outstanding features. The school's excellent provision for the care, support and guidance of pupils provides a very firm foundation for its work. Pupils are valued as individuals and know that they can turn to the adults if they need help or are worried. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with staff and thoroughly enjoy school. They have a very secure understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, and are extremely enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have for sport and exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, contributing very effectively to the strong family ethos of the school community. Older pupils take a pride in the help and care they give to younger ones. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how happy their children are in school, and how well their social and emotional needs are met. Typical was the parent who '...couldn't be happier with the performance, teaching, ethos...' because the school '...raises well-rounded, confident polite children. What more could you ask for!' Parents particularly praised how sensitively the school has helped their children to cope with the recent, tragic death of a fellow pupil.

Standards are consistently above average at the end of each key stage. Pupils' attainment on entry is better overall than is found in most schools and they build on this well, making good progress throughout the school. Reading and mathematics are particular strengths. Writing standards, while still above average, are not as strong, and the school has identified some shortfalls in pupils' skills in writing non-fiction as the reason for this. Staff are currently planning how this can be best addressed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because the management of provision for their needs is good. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of higher ability also do well, as can be seen in the good percentage who obtain the higher grades in national assessments, as well in the high proportion who are successful in gaining entry to the local authority's selective secondary schools.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Classroom management is excellent, and is based on clear expectations, well-established routines and positive relationships. Teachers generally plan well to match work to pupils' individual needs, although occasionally this match is not as precise as it could be. The skilled teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, particularly when teachers maximise their involvement in class. Teachers make good use of practical work and discussion to enthuse pupils and involve them in their work, enhancing their progress and their interest. Pupils work hard, take a pride in their accomplishments, and have very good collaborative skills.

An outstanding curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' exceptional enjoyment of school and their good progress. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport, and vastly improved facilities since the previous inspection contribute to this. A variety of enrichment such as exciting theme days and weeks is thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, including a health week, art days and visits by a multitude of people. These all contribute to different aspects of pupils' learning. Regular use of the schools' own swimming pool and the teaching of French in Years 3 to 6 are among other positive features. Pupils in Year 6 said that the best features of the school, after '...kind teachers,' were '...lots of fun activities during and after school.'

The outstanding pastoral provision for pupils is complemented by good procedures to track their academic progress. These provide a very good basis for teachers to plan challenging work for individuals in English and mathematics, and are used well. The school has rightly identified the need to bring systems in science and information and communication technology (ICT) up to the same standard, and are doing so currently.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent direction to the school and senior staff and subject leaders provide similarly clear direction within their areas of responsibility. Governors have a good understanding of the school, and hold it to account well for its performance. The fact that the tracking systems are paper-based rather than held on computer makes it harder for managers to have a detailed overview of provision, to help them drive improvements. Plans are in hand to introduce an ICT based system. However, managers work hard to use the current system and gain a good view of strengths and weaknesses, and have used the information well to set challenging targets and to improve practice. This supports the school's good self-evaluation, as do the very good procedures to monitor teaching and pupils' work. The headteacher takes a clear lead in this, but subject leaders are increasing involved in observing their colleagues' lessons and looking at samples of work on a frequent and regular basis. This has helped them identify issues and introduce effective procedures to address them. The school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage shares the positive features of the rest of the school. The outstanding pastoral care ensures that children settle in quickly at the start of the Reception year. Parents praise how well this has been done, and how happy their children are. Well-organised lessons, exciting things to do, and good teaching mean that children make good progress from the start, reaching standards that are above average by the start of Year 1. The improved outside learning facilities make a strong contribution to children's learning and to their enthusiasm. Very good use of extra adults provides children with lots of activities where their vocabulary and understanding are promoted well. This contributes to their learning as well as their happiness and self-esteem.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of the systems for tracking pupils' progress, by introducing the planned improvements, to raise standards further.
- Raise achievement by improving pupils' skills in producing different kinds of non-fictional writing.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Kingshill Church of England Combined School, High Wycombe, HP15 6JP

Thank you for all your help and your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed watching you at work and talking to you. You told me that you enjoyed school, and I could see why. I think that it is a good school and some things about it are excellent. These are what I thought were the most important.

- You all get on very well with each other and with the adults, and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers are good at helping you learn so you all do well in your schoolwork and reach good standards. You are good at writing, but not quite so good as you are at reading and maths.
- The adults take very good care of you and work hard to make sure that you are happy and safe in school.
- You have plenty of interesting things to do, and you particularly enjoy all the special days and the different sports that you get to try.
- The staff keep a careful eye on how you get on with your work, although they don't have a computer system yet to help them keep track of this.
- The headteacher and all the other adults organise the school very well and work hard to try to improve things.

I have agreed with the headteacher that to get even better, the school will help you to raise your standards in writing. We also agreed that the staff would set up a computer system to help them keep track of your progress, so they are even better at making sure that everyone gets the help they need.

Thank you again for all your help. I hope that you carry on enjoying school and helping to make Great Kingshill School such a good place to be. You can help your teachers to make improvements by carrying on with your excellent behaviour, and by working hard to improve your writing.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector