

The Grange School, Daventry

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121897
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359110
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	J Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	469
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Banks
Headteacher	Mrs G Yates
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 19 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and children and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 47 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- Has the trend in attainment particularly at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics been maintained?
- Are pupils prepared well enough for their future and their life in multicultural Britain?
- What is the quality of assessment information and is it being used well enough to ensure the curriculum adequately meets pupils' needs?
- How effectively are leaders, managers and governors evaluating all aspects of the school?
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, how effective is the new management and what is the quality of provision?

Information about the school

The school is larger than average for a primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and a well above average number have a statement of special educational need. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average. The school has designated special provision for eight children with speech and language difficulties in the Early Years Foundation Stage and also designated special provision for 10 pupils with autism throughout all key stages. Extended day care is provided in a breakfast club and after-school club. This is inspected and reported on separately. The school has gained a number of national awards including a Healthy School Award and Anti-bullying Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is effectively led and managed by a talented headteacher who is ably supported by staff and governors. In their own evaluation of the school, senior staff and governors were realistic and honest. They are fully aware of improvements that have been made and are continually striving to achieve more. Staff work in teams and effectively monitor pupils' attainment and progress. The information is used well to set challenging targets for pupils. However, on occasions, some teachers do not expect enough of pupils and their progress is slower than usual; and checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils are being provided with suitably challenging work. Nevertheless, the collective efforts of everyone involved with the school and the determination of its leaders and managers gives the school a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' behaviour is good and there is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning in most lessons. There is a clear message for all pupils in the school motto which is 'Enthusiasm in learning'. The effective curriculum which links skills from different subjects in topics such as 'The Aztecs' or 'Victorians' ensures that pupils are provided with interesting and enjoyable lessons. The school has a modern ICT suite and pupils make good progress in ICT; there are few opportunities for this to be exploited across the curriculum. The outstanding care, guidance and support for individual pupils are instrumental in fostering positive attitudes, good behaviour and caring relationships between pupils and with staff. These ensure pupils feel safe, valued and respected. All those spoken to say that they are proud to belong to their school.

Most enter the Nursery with skills that are below average. Effective leadership and management ensure all aspects of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, enabling children to make good progress. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities invariably do well and there is effective support for the very few pupils who have English as an additional language. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and this ensures pupils generally make good progress and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils' progress is more consistently good as they move through the school by:
 - providing pupils of all ability levels with appropriately challenging work
 - checking on the quality of teaching and learning more often.

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- Improve resources for modern technology to enable pupils to use them in the classroom to support and enhance their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school. 'Love it' from one boy was a typical comment. In most of the lessons observed, there was a good atmosphere for learning with pupils concentrating well and most, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities making good progress. On occasions, where the pace of learning was slow or tasks were too easy or hard, some lost concentration and their progress was not as good as usual. The expertise of teachers and specialist support staff working in the two designated special provisions ensure that pupils with speech and language difficulties and autism have the help and resources they need to make good progress when working individually or alongside other pupils in class.

The upward trend in attainment since 2008 has been maintained. By Year 6, attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups and all lessons. This inconsistency is linked to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' performance by Year 2 has also improved year on year but the school has identified that attainment in writing is lower than in other subjects. Standards are rising at a rapid rate because staff in Key stage 1 and throughout the school are employing a range of effective strategies to accelerate progress. These include inspiring pupils to write through drama activities. Although some autistic pupils in the designated special provision do not achieve the levels expected by Year 6, almost all make exceptional progress in their communication and language skills.

Pupils are polite and considerate towards one another. They clearly enjoy learning and the vast majority listen attentively in lessons and live up to the school's high expectations of their conduct. Older pupils in particular take their responsibilities as peer mediators or school councillors seriously. They are especially supportive of younger pupils. The school effectively promotes a different value each month, helping pupils to develop, for example, trust, tolerance and self-belief. Pupils' responsible behaviour contributes significantly to their strong sense of security and feeling safe. The various roles and responsibilities pupils undertake enable most to develop key social and other work place skills well.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons, teaching is effective and this ensures pupils enjoy learning and usually make good progress. Most teachers succeed in making learning challenging, adapting their planning if pupils grasp new work quicker than expected. Learning support assistants usually support pupils' learning well, particularly those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In three lessons where teaching and learning were outstanding, pupils were highly motivated following a brisk, purposeful introduction and clear instructions on how to tackle interesting work which was tailored to their ability. Year 3, for example, were successfully inspired to write after videoing their group performances in drama, acting out activities in the daily lives of people in Africa. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers' introductions to the whole class are too long and expectations of what pupils of different abilities can do are not high enough; there is little for learning support assistants to do during the long introductions; and pupils' concentration wavers because the pace of learning is not fast enough to hold their interest. Teachers are increasingly involving pupils in assessing their own progress, adding to their understanding of how to do even better.

Continuing curriculum development and improvement are having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and helping to raise attainment levels. While maintaining an emphasis on raising standards in English and mathematics, staff have remained committed to planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. Strong links are

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being developed between subjects in order to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively and the school has the Artsmark Gold Award for the quality of its creative curriculum. The school is also a leading school for information and communication technology, advising and supporting other local schools. However, pupils currently do not have enough computers in their classrooms to support or enhance their learning in different subjects. French is taught and strong partnerships with community organisations and a wide range of after-school clubs provide further valuable skills for life for pupils.

The school is acutely aware of the community it serves and staff constantly strive to ensure the quality of their support and guidance are excellent. They succeed in their endeavours. The Fun Club at lunchtimes for autistic pupils, for example, successfully promotes social skills for these pupils. All pupils know that they are exceptionally well cared for. The caring approach is a key factor in raising pupils' self-esteem, encouraging good behaviour and developing considerate relationships between pupils. The quality and effectiveness of the support is routinely evaluated and the expertise of specialists from other agencies often sought to ensure pupils' needs are being met. Every effort is being made to encourage good attendance and punctuality and most parents are supporting the school's efforts to improve attendance further. Transition arrangements are particularly effective, enabling pupils to move seamlessly through the school and settle quickly in their new classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has the skill to get the best out of people and this was acknowledged with the national award for the Best Headteacher in the East of England recently. Her ambition for the school is translated into action by staff who work effectively in faculties or teams, sharing the vision. Sharing responsibility to improve identified priorities means staff are working as one to bring about improvement. However, routines to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently rigorous or frequent enough.

The governors' loyalty and commitment are beyond question with many long serving governors contributing valuable skills from their professional occupations. They are well led and organised. Most visit regularly, have an excellent knowledge of the school and are involved in setting challenging targets. The continuing development in governors' monitoring is reflected in their effectiveness in bringing about improvement. The steady improvement since the previous inspection reflects their effectiveness in challenging staff and in bringing about improvement.

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The good partnership with parents and carers is reflected in the positive comments in the questionnaires. The strong partnerships with a wide range of external agencies are effective in supporting the care and welfare of pupils. Staff constantly promotes equality of opportunity and resolutely tackle any discrimination or harassment. Pupils' safety and welfare is of paramount importance to all staff. At the time of the inspection safeguarding procedures were judged to be good with the school meeting national requirements well. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, having evaluated carefully each aspect and implemented action plans for future development. Pupils have a good awareness of other cultures; for example they remember residential visits to France and religious celebrations when they made clay pots to hold candles for Diwali and created Hindu designs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the good quality of support for them as individuals. Staff interact enthusiastically with all children helping to develop trusting relationships and imparting a joy of learning. The vast majority of children enter with abilities which are below those typical for their age. The consistently good quality of teaching and learning ensures that all, including the very few who have English as an additional language, make good progress. By the end of Reception, skills are at least average in all areas of learning with almost half of children attaining above average standards. The staff with specialist training in the designated special provision for children with speech and language difficulties, are particularly effective in encouraging and developing communication skills. Some staff are not always as effective in developing conversations through their questioning.

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Staff show considerable expertise in providing a wonderful range of activities both indoors and outside in the spacious learning area. Children enthusiastically engage in activities which are usually enjoyable and often exciting. Mixing 'cement' with sand and water to build a wall was messy fun and all enjoyed writing messages to put in a bottle. Children confidently use modern technology such as computers, cameras and programmable toys.

Leadership and management are good with the new leader demonstrating a high level of expertise and the determination to raise standards and quality. The excellent transition arrangements ensure children are confident and happy about starting the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was low compared to other schools. Most of those parents who responded have positive views about the school. A few want the school to take more account of their views and suggestions. Staff and governors are acutely aware of the need to maintain a strong partnership with all parents if pupils are to prosper and do well in school. Inspectors judged the partnership with parents to be effective and staff for their part, recognise that there is always room for improvement in this important aspect.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Grange School, Daventry 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 469 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	68	17	26	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	46	70	19	29	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	56	25	38	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	61	22	33	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	67	21	32	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	53	27	41	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	61	24	36	1	2	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)	33	50	24	36	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	53	25	38	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	44	29	44	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	35	30	45	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	41	62	20	30	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	77	14	21	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



Friday 8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grange School, Daventry, NN11 4HW

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. Yours is a good school. Many of you told inspectors how much you enjoy being pupils at this school. Well done to all of you for showing us how well you can behave in lessons and around the school and for making the school a happy place for everyone. The excellent care, guidance and support that staff provide make sure that you feel totally safe and very well cared for each day. Your parents also agree with you and had plenty of positive things to say about the school.

The inspectors were impressed with the good quality of teaching and learning. In some lessons, however, we thought that some of you could manage even harder work if it was given to you. We know that all of you are trying your best to improve your writing this year and we enjoyed watching your drama activities in Years 3 about African culture and Year 5 about the Aztecs. These are giving you plenty of inspiration for your writing. You have a very modern IT suite and some of your work shows how good you are at using the computers. We would like to see you have more chance to use computers and other modern technology as part of your learning in lessons. In Reception, it was good to see everyone enjoying all the exciting activities planned for you like fishing for words, bathing a baby and building a wall.

Your headteacher, with the support of hard working governors and staff, is helping to make school exciting and interesting every day. We want them to check more often that all of you are being set challenging work in every lesson. We hope that you will continue doing your best and play your part in helping to make your school even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Peacock

Lead inspector

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