

# Grafton Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101206
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	354960
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Beck

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	408
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Nicholson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Grafton Road Dagenham RM8 3EX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Sixteen teachers were observed teaching 20 lessons. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors, staff and representatives of the nearby infant and secondary schools. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation that included information about pupils' progress, examples of pupils' work, procedures for safeguarding pupils, records of monitoring the quality of teaching, the school development plan, minutes from the meetings of the governing body, a report from the school improvement partner and the school's self-evaluation form. In addition, the responses from questionnaires from staff, pupils and 16 parents were considered.

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

- how the significant changes in the school, especially to the leadership and management, are improving the outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of the school's initiatives to improve standards of writing
- improvements to the partnerships with parents and the school's action to reduce the amount of persistent absence.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average school that serves a diverse community. The majority of pupils are White British, while others come from a range of minority ethnic groups, especially Black African, Black Caribbean, Asian and other White backgrounds. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language or who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly similar to that found in schools nationally. Most pupils transfer into the junior school from the infant school that shares the same site. In the past year, with the appointment of a new headteacher, changes have been made to the way the school is organised and the manner in which leaders and managers carry out their roles. The school has recently been awarded Extended School Status.

**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

Grafton Junior is a good school. Changes over the past year with regard to the way the school is organised and how leaders and managers, including the governing body, carry out their roles are having a significant impact on outcomes for pupils. Strong teamwork and a shared sense of purpose underpin the school's good capacity to improve. Most staff respond very well to the high expectations of leaders and managers and accept their responsibility for helping pupils to do as well as they can. Effective self-evaluation procedures, involving the views of staff, governors and parents, have identified key areas for improvement, and determined action has been taken. For example, developments to raise the quality of teaching and learning are proving successful. Much of the teaching is good, and sometimes outstanding, enabling pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, to make good progress, especially in mathematics. Consequently, pupils are reaching broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.

The main reasons for pupils' good and outstanding progress stem from the implementation of key teaching strategies and from pupils' positive attitudes to learning. These include:

- teachers' high expectations of what pupils know and can do
- clear explanations of what pupils are to learn and achieve at the end of the lessons
- good use of assessment to pitch work at the right level of challenge
- effective questioning to gauge pupils' understanding, and adapt the lesson as necessary
- the active involvement of pupils in group work, the chance to discuss their ideas and demonstrate them to the class
- pupils' enthusiasm, good behaviour and willingness to work hard and take a pride in their work
- opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to work with teaching staff as well as effective support assistants, who know how to ensure these pupils develop their independence.

That said, these features are not consistent in all classes across each year group. This is because teaching in some classes is no better than satisfactory. Action taken to improve standards in reading and spelling is also proving successful. Staff do not demonstrate or expect pupils to use a joined script sufficiently to raise standards further in writing. In their questionnaires, some pupils stated that they were not always clear about what they needed to do to improve. While staff tell pupils the targets they are to achieve, these are not always written or explained in a way that pupils find easy to understand. The

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curriculum is rich, enabling pupils to make many links across the different subjects, learn a musical instrument, and apply their literacy and numeracy skills. There are fewer opportunities to extend their information and communication technology skills.

Parents are particularly appreciative of their strengthening partnership with the school. They praise the way staff listen to and resolve their concerns. This close partnership, together with improvements to the quality of teaching, has enabled senior leaders to support families and reduce significantly the amount of persistent absence. Extended School Status has provided funding for an extensive range of clubs and safeguards.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in writing further by:
  - showing pupils how to write well, especially by joining their letters consistently
  - giving pupils targets and clear advice about how to improve their work in a way that they can easily understand
- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring all staff:
  - have high expectations of what pupils know and can do and set challenging tasks
  - enable pupils to play an active role in their lessons
  - check the progress pupils are making and adapt lessons if they are finding the work too hard or too easy
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills.

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

**2**

Pupils enter the school with attainment that is below the national average, especially in writing. Improved rates of progress, as a result of overall good teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills mean that standards when pupils leave the school are broadly average. Provision for pupils with special educational needs during lessons in mathematics and English meets their needs well. In other areas of the curriculum, they are supported effectively by teachers or well-qualified teaching assistants, so that they are independent and play a full part in lessons.

In many lessons, pupils' achievements and enjoyment of school are enhanced by the opportunities for them to work collaboratively in small groups or to work with a partner. This gives pupils the chance to share their ideas or think of different ways to solve problems. Pupils know their views are valued by staff. These good qualities were noted, particularly in a mathematics lesson where pupils were asked to solve a complicated problem to share out money won in the lottery, and in an English lesson about writing a diary. ♦

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and support for each other in a harmonious atmosphere contribute much to their good progress. This was confirmed by a pupil who said it was a great school because pupils respected each other. Determined action to ensure pupils attend school regularly has resulted in improved attendance, so that overall it is average. A large proportion of pupils attend clubs that include sporting,

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musical, sewing, crochet or artistic activities that take place at lunchtime or after school. These contribute well to their healthy lifestyles and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils attending the sewing and crochet club sell finished items and choose how to use the money to benefit other children. Pupils are pleased to be school councillors and play leaders in the playground. They are aware that these are important roles that they must carry out responsibly. In addition, pupils contribute well to the wider community. For example, through fundraising, attendance at local events, competing in national competitions, and developing links with schools abroad.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

A good rich curriculum that has recently been reviewed is designed to meet children's interests and needs as well as promote the skills pupils need for their future lives. It gives them broad experiences in understanding how people live in other parts of the world and the diverse cultures and religions within the school. Visits out and visitors to the school add to pupils' understanding of life now and in the past, and how to keep themselves safe. Residential visits in Year 6 and the chance for all pupils to learn a musical instrument in Year 5, add much to pupils' social and personal development.

Staff use assessment, together with the curriculum, to plan activities that are relevant to pupils' interests and needs. They make links between the different subjects so that learning is purposeful. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use

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information and communication technology to carry out research or record their notes. At the beginning of lessons, pupils receive clear information about what they are to learn and achieve. Staff use skilful questioning to enable pupils to think hard about what they are doing and whether they are being successful in achieving the task. Good lessons are usually pitched with the right level of challenge and amended where pupils finish quickly or need more time to grasp what they are learning. Staff are patient and because behaviour is good, they can give pupils individual attention. In some lessons pupils lose time when they become distracted because expectations of what they can do are not high enough and their abilities are not challenged. Marking and oral feedback in lessons give pupils a good view of how well they are doing. Individual targets are not always written in a way that pupils can understand clearly and this means some feel they do not know enough about how to improve.

Arrangements to help pupils transfer from the infant school or to the secondary school are of high quality. These very close links ensure pupils' continuity of learning and provision, particularly for those with special educational needs. The infant and junior schools collaborated effectively to gain Extended School Status. This has brought increased provision for out-of-school clubs, better safeguarding and a breakfast club for pupils in both schools. In-service training for staff in the primary and secondary school has brought about greater understanding of the differences in expectations and the ways pupils learn. This has enabled the three schools involved to improve the care, guidance and support to pupils when they transfer.

In addition, the school works effectively with other agencies, such as social services and behaviour support, to ensure provision is designed to meet pupils' needs and overcome possible barriers to learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers, including the governing body, are inspiring the school community to share their ambitions to enable all pupils to do as well as they can. The leadership team and middle leadership team, established in the past year, enable all staff to contribute ideas to the developments to drive the school forward. Staff are clear about their roles and are held accountable. Morale is high and the strong teamwork is impacting on outcomes for pupils and improving provision. Parents speak highly of the much valued partnerships with the school, which have grown significantly. Rigorous monitoring is bringing about a consistency of approach in teaching, especially in mathematics and English. Through effective self-evaluation, leaders and

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managers are taking determined steps to drive up the quality of teaching where it is only satisfactory.

The school gives close attention to equal opportunities so that there is little difference in the achievements of different groups. Pastoral care and innovations in the curriculum actively promote equality, and pupils' in-depth understanding of diversity. The school can identify key examples where, together with parents, it has helped pupils to improve behaviour and attendance and so make progress in their learning.

The governing body play an important role in setting the strategic direction of the school. It is involved in evaluating the school by talking to staff and pupils about specific areas they would like to see improved. The governing body also consults parents and as a result action was taken to make the security of the building more robust. Procedures to safeguard pupils are good and are reviewed regularly. Recruitment procedures consist of all the relevant checks.

The provision for community cohesion is good. Leaders and managers have created a cohesive school with a strong sense of its importance in the community. They have a clear understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the community. International food evenings, celebrations of festivals, Around the World week, studies during Black History Month, visits by parents of different nationalities to share their way of life, and a 'French Cafe' evening successfully raise pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. Links with schools in Paris and Uganda give pupils an understanding of the wider world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Very few responses were received from parents at the time of the inspection. The inspection team looked at responses to the questionnaire sent out by the governing body recently and met with a group of parents. The vast majority of parents giving a view are very pleased with their child's experience at the school. They appreciate fully the manner in which the school has a strong partnership with them. It was mentioned that parents would like more information about how well their child is progressing. The school is looking into this. All other issues formed part of the inspection and are covered by the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grafton Junior 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	38	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	56	7	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	6	38	10	63	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	38	9	56	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	44	9	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	25	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	44	9	56	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)	7	44	8	50	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	25	11	69	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	31	9	56	2	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	25	10	63	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	50	8	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	69	5	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 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



30 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Grafton Junior School, Dagenham RM8 3EF**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We listened carefully to what you had to say. You told us that you enjoy being at the school because there are lots of fun things to do. You like going to the lunchtime and after-school clubs, particularly the sports and gymnastic clubs. You are also pleased about the new quiet areas in the playground that you helped to design.

Your school is a good school. Most of you make good progress, especially in mathematics, because you are taught well. You behave well and help each other a lot when you work with a partner or a group because you respect each other. You are very good at sharing your ideas with the rest of the class when you demonstrate to everyone the way you solve a mathematical problem. All the adults in school care about you and you know that you can ask for help if you have a worry. Those of you who act as play leaders or school councillors carry out your roles responsibly.

We agree with the views in your questionnaires that you need to spend a bit more time using computers and receive more advice about how to improve your work. Everyone wants you to do as well as you can and so we have asked the adults to:

- help you to do better in writing by showing you often how to write really well, especially by joining your letters all of the time
- explain your targets and what you need to do to improve your work in ways that you can easily understand
- give you more opportunities to develop your information and communication technology skills
- make sure all teachers give you work that makes you think hard about what you have to do, and alter their lessons if you are finding the work too easy or too hard.

We know you will help your teachers and continue to try to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck

Lead inspector

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