

Graveney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118339
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358319
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Snashall
Headteacher	Lisa Evans
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons, taught by a total of four teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and key members of staff. Other informal discussions took place with pupils and parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, safeguarding documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Account was taken of the 55 parent and carer questionnaires received as well as those from 8 staff and 46 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- The effectiveness of the initiatives adopted by the school to improve the pupils' writing skills.
- How well the pupils use self-assessment opportunities to promote their learning and progress.
- How effectively the school is raising the pupils' awareness of the diversity in the United Kingdom today.
- The extent to which the leaders and managers, including the governing body, succeed in improving provision and pupils' outcomes.

Information about the school

In this smaller-than-average school most pupils are of White British heritage and a few pupils are from other minority ethnic heritages. None speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The movement of pupils in and out of the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving, is high, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural problems. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. The school has several awards reflecting its commitment to promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles and a Basic Skills award. The governing body manages an activity club three days a week.

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

Graveney is a good school. Among its strengths is the high quality of care, guidance and support and excellent safeguarding arrangements for pupils. These features and the school's positive relationships with parents, carers and its partners result in pupils that are happy, confident and successful learners. One comment typified the view of many parents and carers; 'It is a very close-knit community and very much like an extended family.' The pupils' exemplary behaviour is a strong contributory factor to their good achievement, learning and progress. The pupils' attainment is average but rising fast. Historically, pupils have achieved well in reading, mathematics and science but less so in writing. The school's focus on writing has successfully reduced the previous gap between boys' and girls' performance and the pupils are becoming more confident writers. Nonetheless, there is some way to go to ensure that all, but especially those more able, achieve their best in writing. Some opportunities for pupils to write at length occur across the curriculum, but, too often, lesson planning does not provide extension activities or challenge more-able pupils. The improved curriculum provides increasing opportunities for learning through first-hand experiences, whether in role as forensic scientists investigating dinosaur footprints in Years 1 and 2 or when researching facts about the rainforest. The strong links with the local community and the activity club provide a wide range of learning experiences, including music, art and physical education. While the pupils' awareness of diversity across the world is good and it is promoted well through the curriculum, it is not yet focused widely enough on diversity in the United Kingdom today.

The typically good teaching ensures that the pupils' mathematical, scientific and reading skills are strong. Most lessons have a positive learning atmosphere. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed modifying and reviewing each other's stories and used microphones to retell their story orally. The pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well by assistants in lessons and there are close links with outside agencies which enhance the good progress they make. The pupils are proud of their achievements, acknowledged by 'Gallery Stars' and house points. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community as playground buddies and school councillors.

◆ The headteacher, very ably supported by well-focused leaders and managers, has conducted a thorough and effective self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body plays an increasingly influential role in checking for improvements. Monitoring is rigorous and well-developed systems are in place to track the pupils' progress and set challenging targets. The leaders' responsibilities are shared effectively between the small numbers of staff; they also share the clear direction, drive and ambition to maintain improvement. This ensures that the school has sustainability and a good capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing, especially for more-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring extended writing opportunities across the curriculum planning lessons that include extension activities and more challenge
 - planning lessons that include extension activities and more challenge.
- Raise pupils' awareness of others from different backgrounds and beliefs in the United Kingdom today by developing a link with a school with a contrasting community, so enabling the pupils to discover more about peoples' lives in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

After a good start in the Reception Year, the children build quickly on their skills in Years 1 and 2. As a result, almost all attain at least the levels expected of them for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science and many exceed them, though fewer attain high levels in writing. The school's data on pupils' progress clearly indicate a dip in the pupils' writing skills in Years 3 and 4, but by Years 5 and 6 they are back on track. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' attainment is broadly average overall, with writing being the relatively weaker aspect of English. The pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is above that found nationally. The trend is a rising one. Nonetheless, caution is needed when interpreting data for such small cohorts especially given the high mobility in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more in need of support attain as well as their classmates from their starting points. All pupils are benefiting from the good quality additional support and focus to remedy their weaker writing skills, namely in spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. Evidence from books and work on display indicates rapid improvement, with pupils' progress accelerating since the beginning of term.

◆ The pupils told the inspectors that they feel very safe. They are friendly and very well mannered. They are well integrated and genuinely care for each other. The school council is vocal and helps with decisions, for example regarding school uniform. The pupils are proud of their video made for the governing body and they have also produced a book about what it is like to be at Graveney for other children. These activities contribute strongly to the pupils' personal development. The pupils demonstrate good concentration skills and say they enjoy practical learning best. They show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, reflecting the school's Healthy Schools award and Active Mark, and really enjoy 'Wake up and Shake up'. Most take part in the extra-curricular activities and clubs and local competitions. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their well-developed social skills and good literacy and numeracy skills prepare them well for the future. The pupils raise funds for charity, make and sell crafts at local fairs and events and have taken part in local council meetings.

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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	3
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	1
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?

Links with parents and carers are valued and seen as important in supporting the pupils' learning and well-being. Parents and carers receive newsletters, text messages and attend workshops. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires believe the school keeps their children happy and safe. Good induction arrangements ensure that the children settle quickly into the Reception Year and when they move on to secondary school; several parents and carers commented positively on this. Improved identification of individual pupil's needs, accurate tracking of progress and programmes to help pupils catch up from gaps in learning are good and effective. Established links with outside agencies support pupils and families with complex issues exceptionally well. The close working partnership with a few families with attendance issues has raised attendance substantially and this is work that is ongoing.

The strong relationships between the adults and pupils ensure lessons are calm and purposeful. The teachers' planning is usually matched well to the range of abilities and ages within the mixed-age classes, though writing tasks do not always extend more-able pupils. Assessment is used effectively most of the time to ensure that the pupils make the progress they should and to give guidance for next steps. The pupils self-assess well, enjoy using thumbs up or down and smiley faces and say the teachers' marking helps them to know how to improve. The teachers are knowledgeable and experienced. The teaching assistants are well trained and versatile, whether supporting reading, or helping

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gifted and talented pupils or those with more specific learning needs. Good questioning, sharing with the pupils what they are going to learn and why, and the use of talk partners in preparation for writing are generic teaching strengths. The revised curriculum is still being tweaked to make it even better, especially in Years 3 and 4. Where possible, subjects are linked together, through topics such as 'Going green' or 'Different localities' alongside themed science and book weeks. Usually these incorporate a visit or visitors, most recently an artist, poet and actor. A wider choice of books, including more boy-friendly texts, and guided reading sessions are having a good impact on the pupils' skills. The good provision of basic skills is reflected in the school's Basic Skills Quality Mark. The pupils show keen ecological awareness through their links with a local wind farm and they enjoyed an archaeological dig. The curriculum is enhanced greatly through clubs ranging from breakfast, film to gardening. Each child also has the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.

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 school leaders have effectively driven improvement since the last inspection. This is seen in rising attainment, more exciting and creative learning opportunities and improved pupil attendance. The close detailed analysis of teaching quality and use of assessment has helped to accelerate pupils' progress and pinpoint any weaknesses. The school is now, rightly, focused on improving pupils' writing skills, especially the more able. The new model of governance has ensured much greater involvement and accountability. The governing body is involved strategically in school planning and has undertaken its own self-evaluation and skills audit. The family choir and special events are all popular and plans are in hand to hold a parent and carer forum to give parents and carers a more active role. The governing body holds the headteacher and senior leaders firmly to account for the school's performance. The staff are clear about their roles and share the ambition for the school to improve. Two leaders are undertaking management courses to further their development. The staff have direct involvement in evaluating the impact of provision on the pupils' progress. Partnerships with local schools, from sports to a creative writing topic that included making a podcast, and musical events all benefit the pupils' achievement and underpin the school's priority of 'building learning power'. These activities also illustrate how well the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination and why the pupils are achieving well. Statutory health and safeguarding requirements are met rigorously. Checks on staff and child protection procedures and routines are outstanding. The walk to church for Harvest Festival was an exacting operation; everyone wore high-visibility jackets and older pupils held hands with younger ones and all were

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marshalled extremely well by the adults, including parents, carers and members of the local community. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good in terms of its involvement locally and much further afield with links with schools in France and Canada, but planning is at an early stage for reaching out to other communities in the United Kingdom.

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	2
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	1
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 join the Reception Year with a wide range of skills and understanding. They make good progress, especially in their communication and personal skills. The children's physical development is promoted well through the much improved, but small, outdoor learning area. The children love to use the new climbing frame. The stimulating environment ensures plenty of scope for their creative skills and knowledge and understanding of the world, which develop at a good rate. In role as pirates, they enjoy digging for buried treasure - sparkly letters and gold letter coins - and draw treasure maps. They get on well with each other and enjoy helping their dragon puppet to prepare for his trip around the world. They help him to write his shopping list, work out how much it all might cost, go shopping, pack their bags and help the dragon to pack his case. Through their topic Princess Sparkle and Dragons, they enjoy being in character and the constant ongoing dialogue and skilled questioning by the adults help the children to make gains in their confidence and learning. As one child told another cutting out shapes, 'I know what to do ? look'. They can recognise their names and are building on their knowledge of linking letters and sounds, whether drawing letters in foam, sand or on paper or using flashcards in a game. Most areas of learning, including reading and all aspects of their mathematical development, are above age-related expectations by the start of Year 1, though their early writing skills are average. The welfare of the children has a high priority. The children are encouraged to eat healthy snacks and enjoy this time

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to socialise. They are very aware of their own safety and that of others. The experienced leader ensures learning is interesting and fun. The children help to plan and choose what they are going to learn too and there is a good balance of adult- and child-led learning experiences. The adults work well as a team and, together, provide parents and carers with a good insight into their children's learning through illustrated learning journals, 'My summer holiday' booklets and regular progress records.

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

More than half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Almost all were positive about the school's work. Every parent and carer responding felt their child was safe and happy and were happy with their child's experience at Graveney. There were also a number of positive comments about the impact of the leaders, managers and staff, the children's progress and the varied and exciting learning opportunities. A small minority had concerns about how well the school managed behaviour. The inspectors judged behaviour to be exemplary and that the teachers have good strategies in place to deal with and support the pupils on the rare occasions when behaviour may be a concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Graveney 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	69	17	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	53	20	36	4	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	62	17	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	58	22	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	53	20	36	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	51	25	45	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)	21	38	29	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	56	24	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	49	20	36	5	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	45	23	42	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	55	21	38	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	69	17	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

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.



22 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Graveney Primary School, Faversham, ME13 9DU

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing how hard you work. You told us how much you enjoyed school. We are not surprised by this because it is a good school that provides you with lots of exciting things to do.

- All of the adults take really good care of you and you feel very safe.
- The children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The progress you make in English, mathematics and science is improving. In mathematics and science, you reach standards that are higher than most children in these subjects. We want you to do just as well in English.
- You keep fit and healthy and take part in lots of sport activities. Well done!
- Your behaviour is excellent and you enjoy taking responsibility. It was super to see the older ones looking after the younger ones on the way to church.
- Your school has developed good partnerships with other schools and organisations. This means you are benefiting from specialist teaching in sports, arts and music.
- The teachers plan interesting things for you and this helps you to learn well.
- Your headteacher, staff and the governing body are working hard to improve the school even more.

There are two things that we have suggested could be improved.

- You could be making better progress in writing because you are not always given work that matches your ability and stretches you in different subjects, particularly those of you who find it easy.
- The school could help you find out more about the different cultures in our country.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard, share your ideas for writing in different subjects and let teachers know if the writing tasks are too easy for you.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning (on behalf of the inspection team)

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