

Grafham Grange School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125482
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359900
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	10–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Collin Gong
Headteacher	Richard Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Grafham Bramley Guildford GU5 0LH
Telephone number	01483892214
Fax number	01483 894297
Email address	schooloffice@grafham-grange.co.uk

Age group	10–17
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Inspection number	359900

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one social care inspector. Seven lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with a range of education and residential care staff, students, the chair of the trustees and both the director and manager of the trusts' children's services. Inspectors observed the school's work during the day and in the evening, and looked at a range of documentation, such as assessment data, attendance, behaviour and incident logs, and school development planning. The six questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff.

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

- The procedures for tracking and analysing students' progress and the use of this information in supporting individuals and in setting targets.
- The impact of the residential provision in supporting students' learning and personal development and enriching their curriculum.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management strategies.
- The range of accredited courses and subjects that is available, either in school or through partners.

Information about the school

The school is administered by the Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust, which is also responsible for a residential special school for primary-aged pupils. Grafham Grange is a smaller than average special school, having places for up to 52 students. Of these, a maximum of 44 can attend as weekly boarders. Therefore, local authorities some miles away from the school place students there and there are currently 26 boarders, placed by 16 local authorities.

All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The majority have specific additional needs too, such as those associated with autism. A large majority of the students have a White British heritage. A very small minority are looked after children. No student is at an early stage of learning English. The post-16 students on roll receive their full-time education off-site at local colleges.

There have been very significant changes in the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher at that time left in the summer of 2008. Since then, there has been one permanent headteacher and two acting headteachers. The current acting headteacher took up post in September 2010. There has also been a large turnover of staff during this period.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Grafham Grange is a satisfactory school with satisfactory residential provision. Frequent changes in leadership have impeded the school's ability to progress rapidly since the previous inspection. The new leadership team, ably led by the acting headteacher, has begun to improve the situation. For instance, data from school evaluation procedures are collated and analysed accurately, so that, appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and relevant action taken. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement. However, there has been insufficient time for these newly developed practices and procedures to become fully embedded in order to produce consistently good outcomes for all students. The boarding provision fails to meet two national minimum standards, which relate to the provision for students who are unwell, and the application of systems to counteract bullying in the residential provision.

Students' attainment is low. They have a history of disrupted schooling as a result of non-attendance and periods of exclusion caused by their challenging behaviour. Following admission to Grafham Grange, non-attendance remains a barrier to accelerated learning for a few students, especially day-students. Attendance is low. Overall, students' progress and achievement are satisfactory, and leaders' focus on developing the quality of teaching is resulting in some increase in the pace of learning. As a result of improving classroom practice, teaching and the use of assessment are satisfactory. Inconsistency remains in the extent to which all teachers routinely use assessment information to plan activities that match every student's learning needs. Good links with partners supports students' learning well. The school also has good links with parents and carers. It does not, however, make enough use of this opportunity to accelerate students' learning through a programme that enables them, and residential care workers in the case of boarders, to support students' learning in out-of-school hours. The school-based curriculum is satisfactory, although the residential provision provides a good range of after-school activities.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The school provides a good level of guidance and support, and it has comprehensive and wide-ranging policies and procedures to protect students. Monitoring of behaviour is good. As a result, the quality of behaviour in school time is satisfactory and improving. However, there is more work to do to ensure that students are guided even more effectively to manage their own behaviour outside lessons so that all students feel safe all of the time. Students make good progress in developing their understanding of how to remain healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of students' learning and progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers routinely match appropriately challenging activities to students' capabilities in order to promote independent learning
 - increasing the rate of attendance, especially of day-students
 - implementing a planned programme that enables parents, carers and residential care workers to support students' learning out of school.
- Improve further students' behaviour in unstructured situations ensuring that students are guided to manage their own behaviour more effectively so that they feel safe all of the time.
- Ensure that the school meets all the national minimum standards for boarding provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students arrive in the school as disaffected young people with negative and challenging attitudes and low attainment. The school helps many to transform their lives by changing their behaviours and re-engaging with education. However, a small minority find it difficult to accept the opportunities offered. This has an adverse effect on students' academic and personal outcomes overall. Their achievement is satisfactory. Leaders' analysis of data demonstrates that no group of students performs less well than others.

The low attendance of a few day-students prevents even more rapid learning and accelerated progress. Despite these features, in relation to their starting points, students make satisfactory progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding, and in developing key literacy and numeracy skills. Therefore, they achieve passes in accredited courses and, in a few cases, this includes GCSE at grade C or above in subjects such as science and art. They also receive recognition for their work in other ways, such as the award of a certificate in first aid at work. In the lessons observed, students learned at a satisfactory rate overall and made satisfactory progress towards learning what was expected of them. The attendance of a few students at colleges to study for vocational qualifications, and most students' involvement in work experience contribute to them being prepared satisfactorily for leaving school. Last year, all but one student entered education, employment or training. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through, for example, involvement in the student council and a satisfactory contribution to the local neighbourhood, such as their support for a local community therapy garden.

Overall, the extent to which students feel safe is satisfactory. They know about situations which might pose a risk to their safety, and they are aware of circumstances in which they are potentially vulnerable. A few students report that they sometimes feel unsafe in school, although most did not support this and no parents, carers or staff who returned their questionnaires expressed any concerns about students' safety. During the inspection, students' behaviour was satisfactory. When students are in lessons and other supervised situations, they generally behave appropriately and often well. However, evidence shows that, particularly in less closely supervised situations, some students' behaviour deteriorates as they find self-control difficult.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 a few lessons there is high quality practice, although teaching is satisfactory overall. Relationships are generally positive and students' behaviour is managed appropriately. Staff have good subject knowledge and they use information and communication technology well as a teaching tool. Lesson planning does not consistently draw upon information about students' attainment and prior achievements to plan a range of different activities that meet the wide range of students' abilities. Consequently the degree of challenge is not always at the right level, and, at these times, students struggle to work independently.

The school curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning activities, with an appropriate focus on the core subjects and personal, social and health education. This enables students to pursue accredited subjects and courses, although these are relatively narrow in range. The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and it is supplemented by community-based learning. Leaders have identified how they can enhance provision for creative and performing arts, such as drama and the increased availability of music, and establish subjects and programmes like food technology and mini-enterprise schemes.

Students' induction into school, and the transition period as they prepare to leave, is managed very well. The children's services manager tailors impressive packages that provide information, advice and practical support. The school has recently introduced a

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

number of systems for improving its ability to provide targeted pastoral support and guidance. These include procedures for tracking students' personal achievements and development. Although at an early stage of implementation, the tracking arrangements allow the school to make good use of the data it collects by enabling it, for example, to better support students through inter-agency working. Adults manage students' behaviour appropriately in lessons, but strategies for giving students the skills to self-manage their behaviours are not entirely effective. Therefore, while the school monitors behaviour very well and deals effectively with unacceptable episodes, its procedures for guiding students to change these behaviours are only partially successful. The school is working very hard with sponsoring local authorities at tackling the absenteeism of a few students, although it is finding the low attendance rate stubbornly difficult to change even though it has established good procedures to do so. This is because the number on roll is so small that single absences have a major impact on the overall rate. At times the rate shows signs of improvement, and then just one or two absences see it decline quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has been through a turbulent period. The uncertainty associated with frequent changes of headteacher and a high staff turnover has taken its toll. The situation has now stabilised as the current leadership team has introduced rigour into the way that the school audits itself and responds to the findings. The team is ambitious and it has the support of the governing body and staff. It has a good understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards and it has begun to take the necessary steps to do so. However, this is at an early stage of implementation. Some actions identified by leaders have not yet begun, such as developing links with other schools to moderate the accuracy of teachers' assessments, while others have been introduced but are not yet embedded in practice, such as consistent lesson planning. Consequently, leaders' effectiveness in driving forward improvement and raising the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Leaders now monitor students' academic performance closely and intervene, such as through booster literacy sessions, if students are not on track to achieve targets. They also monitor critical incidents to check that no group of students is disproportionately represented as perpetrators or victims. The school dealt decisively with a recent incidence of racist behaviour. Day-students have full access to the after-school activities that are provided for boarders.

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

High quality documentation and procedures guide the school's work in safeguarding students. Procedures for vetting prospective staff and training them in child protection and physical restraint are securely in place. Established systems enable the school to record and deal well with instances of unsatisfactory behaviour. It responds to them swiftly through discussions with individuals and groups of students, and in some cases by using fixed-term exclusions. While there are signs that this is having an impact in reducing the frequency of such incidents, There is still more to do to ensure all students are enabled to improve their own behaviour. The governing body provides satisfactory oversight of the school's work. It ensures that statutory requirements are met, including those associated with the residential provision, through the receipt of detailed reports and from first-hand knowledge gained through visits. However, it does not always provide a sufficiently sharp enough focus on conclusions to be drawn from raw data presented in reports.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. The children's services manager makes sure that the school has a comprehensive understanding of the students and of the circumstances in which they and their parents or carers live. The isolated location of the school means that there is no immediate community of any significant size, although leaders have successfully reached out and developed links with local groups and communities. A local college now uses the school's ground for environmental work, and other groups use its physical education facilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response from parents and carers was relatively low, with around a fifth of the small number on roll returning questionnaires. Those that were returned, however, are almost unanimously positive about the school and the work that it does. Comments such as 'my son is very happy at the school', and 'with the school's help, my son has changed

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

emotionally for the better' are representative of parents' and carers' views. Inspectors' judgements do not align closely to the opinions of parents and carers, especially in relation to students' behaviour and the effect that this has on others' safety, and the rate at which their children make progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grafham Grange 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 six completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	33	3	50	1	17	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	33	4	67	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)	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	83	1	17	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Grafham Grange School, Guildford, GU5 0LH

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. Special thanks go to those of you who gave up your time to speak with us. Grafham Grange is a satisfactory school. The residential units are also satisfactory.

You make satisfactory progress with your work and in growing up as young people. Lessons are satisfactory, as is the range of subjects that you study. Staff care about your welfare and they are always available to help, guide and support you. You know a lot about how to stay healthy, but you need to do better in other ways. Some of you told us that you do not always feel safe in school. That is because there are too many occasions when you fall out with each other. Also, quite a few of you do not go to school as often as you should.

The people who run the school do a satisfactory job. They have many ideas about how to make the school better and we have asked them to do the following in order to help them to achieve this.

- Put in place procedures that ensure that all of you feel safe all of the time.
- Improve facilities for you if you feel unwell.
- Make sure that teachers always provide you with work that is set at just the right level so that you can tackle it on your own.
- Get more of you to attend school more often.
- Encourage you to progress more quickly by working closely with your parents or carers and residential staff so that they can help you to learn after school.

You can help them to make these improvements by going to school as often as you possibly can, by taking more responsibility for managing your own behaviour and respecting the needs and safety of other students at all times. Finally, I wish each of you success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.