

Grass Royal Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123729 |
| Local Authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 359499 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Tony Shield |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 233 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Gary Turner |
| Headteacher | Judith Barrett |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 November 2007 |
| School address | Grass Royal Yeovil Somerset BA21 4JW |
| Telephone number | 01935423863 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons, and 10 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, members of staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. While there was no formal meeting with parents and carers, in reaching their judgements, inspectors took into account the views of 67 parents and carers, in addition to those of pupils and staff, expressed in questionnaires.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether progress is continuing to improve and is at least satisfactory through the school, for all groups of pupils.
- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging, including for the more able.
- The impact of action taken to tackle identified weaknesses, including strategies to improve attendance.
- The quality of the school's monitoring and self-evaluation and whether all leaders are making an effective contribution to school improvement.

Information about the school

Grass Royal is an average sized junior school that draws most of its pupils from the immediate area. Most pupils are from a White British background, with a small number from other ethnic heritages. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, and the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than is found in most schools. The school has received the Healthy Schools 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Grass Royal is a satisfactory school, and one that is improving rapidly. The headteacher's determined approach and clarity of purpose have inspired the whole school community. Expectations have been raised and there is a sharp focus on doing the best for all pupils. A positive climate for learning has been established and the school is making confident strides forward. Improvements have been based on accurate and realistic self-evaluation which, in turn, is the result of a careful and comprehensive analysis of performance data alongside regular monitoring of provision. Plans for further improvement are sharply defined and leaders and managers at all levels have been successful in tackling weaknesses and in moving the school forward. Improvements to behaviour, teaching and the curriculum are testament to the school's effective work. As a result, the school's capacity for sustaining its improvement is good.

There are a number of key strengths and areas for further improvement.

- Attainment in both English and mathematics is improving and is now broadly average although somewhat below where it should be for some pupils. Progress is satisfactory overall, and some pupils are striding ahead and making good progress. While some pupils write imaginatively and with a careful attention to detail, for others, basic skills of grammar, punctuation and presentation are weak. Nevertheless, the sharp focus on measures to tackle this issue is beginning to show results. Some pupils lack confidence in using their skills across different subjects.
- While teaching is satisfactory overall because of its impact on pupils' progress, much teaching observed was good. Nevertheless, some inconsistent approaches remain, and pupils do not make as much progress when they are not actively involved in the learning, when tasks are not carefully geared to the needs of individual pupils and when pupils are not encouraged to think about how they might improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, and they try hard to do their best in lessons. This is a key factor in their improving progress. Another important aspect is the well-planned curriculum. The emphasis on developing basic skills is balanced by lots of opportunities for enriching the learning.
- Pupils are polite and kind. Their awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle is good. Although pupils say they enjoy school, overall attendance is low and a few pupils miss too much school. ♦
- Care for the individual is threaded through the fabric of the school and pupils say they feel safe and know how to stay safe. The school's policies and procedures for looking after the most vulnerable pupils are good. ♦

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- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand their responsibilities to the community and enjoy the opportunities offered to contribute both within school and more widely.
- Partnerships with other schools and external agencies are productive and pupils benefit from a range of external links.
- The governing body and leaders and managers at all levels are making a good contribution to school improvement. Monitoring is regular and staff are relishing the opportunity to contribute to school improvement.

The school has the confidence of most parents and carers. They are mostly happy with their children's experience at school, and many acknowledge the recent changes for good. As one parent wrote: 'My daughter has flourished and her confidence and self-esteem have grown'; another wrote: 'The school has become a better environment in which children can learn.'

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics and accelerate the learning and progress of all pupils by:
 - involving the pupils more actively in their learning
 - ensuring that pupils understand the progress they are making and the steps necessary to improve
 - making sure that tasks in lessons are tailored more precisely to the different needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring pupils' skills are practised regularly and applied in different and relevant contexts
 - ensuring greater consistency and spreading good practice more widely.
- Improve attendance, particularly of the small number of pupils whose poor attendance has a negative impact on their progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Although standards have been significantly below average in recent years, they are now improving strongly and progress is accelerating. Attainment in both English and mathematics is broadly average. Changes to the curriculum have encouraged pupils to write with more creativity. This was seen in a Years 3/4 English lesson, in which pupils' imagination was sparked by a dramatic intervention in their descriptive writing. As a result, pupils demonstrated good ideas such as 'leaves like a thousand butterflies fluttering'. At the same time, pupils' ability to write clearly and with correct grammar and spelling has improved significantly. Nevertheless, there is much still to be done to improve progress, and some pupils' skills and confidence still lag behind. Many pupils have difficulty in manipulating and using numbers quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of sharply focused individual support.

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The handful of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, once their confidence in the use of English is established.

Pupils of all ages are keen to do well and please their teachers. They listen attentively and cooperate sensibly in class. They speak with pride of their school and enjoy opportunities to take part in school decision making through the school council. Many pupils have a well-developed sense of responsibility both for themselves for others, as play leaders in the playground or in organising clubs and raising funds. Pupils' awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, reflected in the Healthy Schools award, has been enhanced by initiatives such as 'Let's get cooking' and a range of sporting activities offered through the local physical education (PE) partnership. Attendance for most pupils is satisfactory, but a small number of pupils and their families are resistant to the school's dogged work to encourage good attendance. As a consequence, overall days lost through absence are higher than in most schools. Many pupils' basic skills, including their computer skills, are satisfactory, but they do not confidently apply these in different contexts.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 4 |
| 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?

Lessons are characterised by a busy and purposeful atmosphere. While teaching is satisfactory overall, much teaching observed was good. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn, and often encourage the pupils themselves to articulate what would make for success in the given task. Marking is conscientiously carried out but

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a minority of pupils say they do not know how well they are doing in class. Tasks are usually well chosen to make learning interesting and fun. In the most effective lessons, the pace of learning keeps pupils on their toes, planning takes account of prior learning and questions skilfully make pupils think for themselves. However, this is not consistently the case, and pupils themselves commented that they learn more when they are more actively involved. Sometimes, teachers talk too much. In addition, planning is not always adapted to ensure tasks are sharply tailored to the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.

The curriculum provides a good balance of work to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills alongside imaginatively planned activities to develop wider learning opportunities. Programmes such as 'The Forest School' give pupils exciting and memorable learning experiences. Provision for vulnerable children, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly well organised. As a result, pupils whose needs are sometimes acute are included and involved in all the school has to offer. A good range of visits, visitors and clubs further enriches the opportunities for pupils.

At the heart of the school's work is the attention it gives to pupils' care, guidance and support. The sensitive consideration given to children whose circumstances make them vulnerable reflects the school's strong commitment to removing any barrier to learning. Extensive links with external agencies are in place to ensure all pupils feel valued and well looked after. Transfer arrangements between the school and both its partner infant schools are carefully managed.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's determined drive for improvement is a reflection of the concerted and effective work of the headteacher and her senior team. The school has embarked on an ambitious journey. Teaching has improved because a sharper use of performance data has raised the game, and expectations are much higher. Challenging targets are being used effectively to encourage all pupils to aim high. Although much remains to be done, there are secure signs of progress. Realistic self-evaluation based on regular monitoring has been the launch pad for these developments. The governing body is playing an increasingly effective role, particularly in strategic planning. It ensures all statutory functions are met and has rightly identified a need to develop sharper approaches to involving governors in monitoring. ♦♦

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All policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils are in place. ♦ Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and ensuring pupils are safe and this is given a high priority in the school. The school's commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities is evident in the assiduous way in which it has successfully reduced potential barriers to learning for specific pupils. However, there is more to be done before all pupils reach their potential. The school is a harmonious community and satisfactorily promotes cohesion in the wider community. It has not formally audited or evaluated its provision.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were generally supportive of the school and are appreciative of all that the school does for their children. Most parents and carers believe that their children enjoy school, are safe and helped to live a healthy lifestyle. Most also consider their children are doing well at school, that the teaching is good and they are happy overall with their children's experience. A number of parents and carers who added comments said how much the school had improved. Others were 'thoroughly impressed with the transition from the infants school'. There were a few negative comments, mostly concerned with behaviour. Inspectors judge the pupils' behaviour to be well managed by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grass Royal 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection, a broadly average response rate. In total, there are 233 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 25 | 37 | 39 | 58 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 29 | 43 | 33 | 49 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 22 | 33 | 38 | 57 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 25 | 37 | 32 | 48 | 8 | 12 | 2 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 26 | 39 | 35 | 52 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 20 | 30 | 37 | 55 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 31 | 40 | 60 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 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) | 18 | 27 | 39 | 58 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 17 | 25 | 42 | 63 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 18 | 27 | 35 | 52 | 12 | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 16 | 24 | 34 | 51 | 7 | 10 | 5 | 7 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 23 | 34 | 29 | 43 | 8 | 12 | 5 | 7 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 28 | 42 | 27 | 40 | 8 | 12 | 2 | 3 |

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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grass Royal Junior School, Yeovil, BA21 4JW

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and talking with some of you. We have taken your views into account in writing this report. Grass Royal Juniors is a satisfactory and improving school. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You told us how much you enjoy school, because the school is such a happy place to be and you get on well with each other. Your behaviour is good, both in and out of the classroom, and we thought you were polite and helpful to us.
- Not all of you attend school as regularly as you should. This is really important because if you miss too much schooling, your work suffers. We have asked the teachers to work with you and your parents and carers to improve this.
- You are doing much better in your work in both English and mathematics, but some of you still have much to catch up. We have asked the teachers to make sure you practise your skills by using them in different subjects. While much teaching is good, sometimes teachers do not involve you enough in the learning and in particular making sure you know how to improve. Nor do they always set work which really makes all of you think hard!
- The school takes really good care of you and as a result you feel safe. You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy and active life.
- The school gives you lots of really interesting things to learn about and get involved in, both during the school day and afterwards. We particularly enjoyed observing you learning at the Forest School!
- The governors, headteacher and staff are working successfully to make the school better still. You can help by coming to school regularly and trying your hardest.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future.

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

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