

Graffham Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125831
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359951
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Thornley
Headteacher	Helen Martin
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. It is part of the Lavington Park Federation along with Duncton Church of England Junior School. Both schools were inspected at the same time as much of the documentation, policies and procedures relates to both schools. Eight lessons or parts of lessons were observed taught by 3 teachers. Meetings and discussions were held with members of staff, governors and pupils. Much of the school's work was observed and various documents were scrutinised including the school improvement plan, assessment data and teachers' files. Questionnaires from 10 staff as well as 33 parental questionnaires were also analysed.

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

- Determine how well the school's data matches the apparent data in national statistics and whether progress and attainment is as good as the school suggests.
- Whether the provision and outcomes are as good as the school suggests and what has changed since the last inspection.
- Has the school improved sufficiently since the last inspection given the significant staffing changes and how this has affected the progress of pupils over the longer term?

Information about the school

This is a much-smaller-than-average infants school. Children start in the Reception class and continue into the mixed age class for Years 1 and 2. They then move onto the junior school some four miles away. The Federation uses minibuses extensively to move pupils between the two sites for different activities. There is also a Nursery on site that is not managed by the school and was not part of this inspection.

Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also low. Since the last inspection all the teachers have changed. The school has been gained a Healthy School award, an international award and is nationally recognised for its work as a 'Forest School'.

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?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

This is an outstanding school that has considerably improved since its last inspection. Outcomes for pupils are excellent and they achieve well in their academic studies. Pupils behave exceptionally well and, even at this young age, have a very thorough understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. The headteacher has gained the full confidence of the parent body, staff and governors and has been instrumental in making the whole Federation an integral part of the community. Weaker aspects of provision in the past, such as in teaching, have been tackled with rigour so that all lessons are challenging, interesting and motivating for the pupils. With the obvious enjoyment of pupils it is surprising that attendance is only average despite the best, conscientious efforts of the school to ensure that extended holidays are not taken during term time.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class, which is very closely connected with work going on in the Nursery. Activities are well directed towards the individual needs of each child and progress, as seen in the assessment data, the children's work and in lessons, is rapid. The classroom environment is very well thought out with attractive inside and outside activities and always linked to a central theme such as 'Pirates'.

By the time children leave to go into Year 1 they are extremely well prepared for more formal work within the rest of the school. The success of these relatively recent improvements is demonstrated by the sometimes excellent work and attitudes to learning of those pupils presently in Year 1 and how this contrasts with good work of those in Year 2. Nevertheless, pupils in both Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least good progress although it is better in reading and writing than in mathematics. Results of tests show that there has been significant improvement in the attainment of pupils in the present Year 2 with above average results in reading and writing. Also significant, is the good proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3. In mathematics, overall performance is average although again the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 is impressive.

Many elements of pupils' personal development are exemplary. Even the youngest children are given opportunities to undertake risk assessments such as when the Reception children made sure they did not go into the fire circle on a visit to the forest. Much of this is due to the outstanding quality of the care, guidance and support given to the pupils. Connections with the local community are extensive and include numerous linked activities, assemblies and local events.

Leaders, managers, staff and members of the governing body form an excellent team. Self-evaluation is highly realistic and forms the starting point for new developments. Individual governors challenge the work of the school from a background of good understanding due to their own thorough monitoring of what goes on. The headteacher and assistant headteacher are passionate and realistic about making the school one of the

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best and have the capability and expertise to do so. This has included employing new members of staff who are ensuring that teaching is always good, sometimes exemplary and caters well for the needs of individuals. With the significant changes in staffing and in the amalgamating of the two schools, the school has turned a corner since reorganising into an infant and junior school four years ago and since the last inspection. There is still more to do to ensure attainment continues to rise but there is already good evidence that the school has an outstanding capacity to move forward rapidly.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, raise attainment in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to apply the numeracy skills they have acquired in realistic problem-solving activities which are developed across a range of other subjects.
- By July 2012, raise the overall level of attendance by increasing parental awareness of the importance of their children being at school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Children start with generally above average skills for their age although, because of the small numbers in each cohort, this can vary considerably year on year. Over the last two years much improved cooperation between the on-site Nursery and the Reception class has meant that children are much better prepared for their schooling especially in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children are able to share toys and ideas during their play and have good speaking and listening skills. Through the Reception year they make excellent progress. Writing and reading skills are improved through the incisive planning and comprehensive assessments, all of which provides relevance and challenge to children's learning and play.

This excellent early preparation means that a high proportion of pupils in Year 1 are already working at levels above those expected for their age particularly in their writing where they have achieved confident use of grammar conventions, spelling and vocabulary. This year group are making excellent progress. In Year 2 the provision over time has been more chequered and so within the last year the school has provided high levels of support to ensure that any missing gaps in learning have been addressed. For example, small groups of pupils are given support with their phonics work and in their writing. Assessments show that, this year, almost all of this year group have made at least the progress expected and some have done much better. Nevertheless, there is still more to do to ensure that these pupils have a good understanding of mathematical concepts and more importantly that they can apply these in a range of situations such as when measuring, estimating and problem-solving.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils listen attentively and, when working independently, concentration levels are high. This was very noticeable when pupils were blending coloured chalks to design flowers and when they enthusiastically wrote about gory recipes. The Healthy schools award bears testament to the excellent knowledge of the pupils about what to put in their lunchboxes and the healthy exercise sessions first thing in the morning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enthusiastically learnt about the Japanese Tsunami and lifestyles using the expertise of a native speaking member of staff and wrote empathetically about what happened. The school rightly acknowledges that, despite gaining an International award,

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there is still more to do to ensure that pupils have the fullest understanding of the wider cultural diversity both in this country and further afield.

Pupils are well prepared for their later schooling. However the school, in an attempt to ensure that parents and carers see the value of high levels of attendance, has had to bring in more stringent measures to ensure that extended family holidays do not disrupt the continuity of learning. This has not yet been as effective as the school hoped.

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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils learn well. There are a number of common strengths. These include the well-developed planning that links together different subjects and skills, good understanding about when pupils are becoming bored and so changing activities and the need to provide good support for those who need it. These were demonstrated extremely well in a fast-paced literacy lesson where some pupils, working with the teacher were encouraged to improve a piece of writing, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were given good targeted support by a teaching assistant and others were working independently on their writing.

The teaching of mathematics, while good, has not been as effective in moving on attainment as well as it has in literacy. This is particularly the case in applying and extending pupils' confidence in using their number skills in more unfamiliar situations

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where higher level opportunities are needed. For example, in a discussion with some Year 2 pupils they had some difficulty in explaining about the differences between a tally and a graph and were not sure of its relevance. Marking, target-setting and assessments are used extremely effectively to help pupils understand what they need to do next. Teachers use a variety of methods but almost all pupils are aware of what their next steps are in learning and how they need to go about achieving these. These assessments also provide teachers with a way of quickly intercepting learning when a concept has not been fully grasped.

The highly effective curriculum motivates and enchants the pupils' interest. The use of the Forest School ethos to help pupils take calculated risks in the outside environment also provides a major starting point for imaginative, written and creative experiences. A wealth of other opportunities such as in art, Spanish, music and physical education are all providing a fully rounded education for the pupils and a lively preparation for their future lives.

The staff are highly attentive to the care and welfare of the pupils. Robust policies and procedures ensure that any personal issues are addressed. Signs detailing any individual medical problems are prominently but discreetly displayed so that all staff have a clear understanding should the need arise. As a result both pupils and parents have full confidence that everybody is kept safe and secure.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's infectious enthusiasm and high expectations to make the Federation work for everybody has been the prime motivator for the successes that have been achieved. Other senior managers, governors and all the staff share a similar vision. This is universally endorsed in both the staff and parental questionnaires. It has not been an easy road, with many challenges. Significant staffing changes, new building and working between two sites has meant that innovative solutions have been sought and achieved. For example, child protection officers have to be available on both sites and so there are a number of qualified staff who can take on the role. It is these types of attention to detail that are ensuring that safeguarding is effective. To ensure that there can be a constant use of minibuses staff have been given the opportunity to take the appropriate tests and, when pupils have to wait for these, teachers from both schools can use classrooms for lessons in each building. This has ensured that as little time as possible is wasted such as when a class assembly saw all pupils from both schools at Graffham. Highly efficient and effective and realistic monitoring of teaching along with highly focused support has been

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at the core of the improved quality of teaching and learning and is having a substantial impact on raising the progress and attainment of pupils.

Equality of opportunity has a high and effective priority. Pupils rightly say that there is no evidence of any discrimination and, with the improving attainment levels, so progress rates are being evened out. Members of the governing body have also played a significant role in moving the school forward. Minutes of meetings show that there have been some important challenges such as when investigating the recent building refurbishment. This has helped ensure that senior leaders within the school have a good sounding board for any new developments. The governing body has also put in place a policy for community cohesion and have started work to implement it. Members are correctly aware that this now needs embedding within all the work of the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision and outcomes for children in the Reception class are outstanding. Good personal and social skills are developed through a wide range of interesting and practical activities that encourage children to be inquisitive and to find out more. For example, when in the forest, children were able to help build a fire, search for pirate treasure and to sit safely within a shelter when it was raining. They sensibly sat down when drinking their hot chocolate and helped each other to find their way about. These types of experiences are then built upon in the classroom to expand children's knowledge of literacy and numeracy. They confidently try out new words in their writing and explore programs on the computer. This is all because the high quality leadership, over the last two years, ensures teacher's planning is comprehensive and based upon a thorough understanding and assessment of how these young children learn.

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Adult support is exemplary. In one case, a teaching assistant was highly involved in building a pirate ship. Seeing that they wanted a flag to be raised she encouraged children, on their own, to find out ways to attach it and to think about how it could be held up. In this way, children's independence is fully developed, their speaking and listening skills enhanced and they learn to share and support one another.

By the end of the Reception year, children have above average skills in communication, language and literacy development and have an equally good development within their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development. Although broadly average, mathematical development is not quite as good, something which the latest development plans are focused upon improving through better links between a variety of subjects. Excellent links have been forged with the on-site Nursery where both sets of children work and play happily together. This prepares children well for their start at school. The many varied and exciting experiences and high expectations by the adults are ensuring that, by the time they start Year 1, children are fully prepared for work as they move through the rest of the school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

With a high response from the questionnaires, parents and carers are unanimous in saying that their children's experience at school is positive. There are many other strengths noted with almost no disagreement. These are endorsed by the views of the inspection. There is only an extremely small measure of concern in the progress of pupils. While pupils' progress is good, the school recognises the view of the inspection that there is a need to improve this to the highest level and there are plans in place to make sure this happens.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Graffham Infants 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 inspector received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	94	2	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	88	4	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	61	13	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	58	10	30	2	6	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	61	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	70	9	27	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	82	6	18	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)	21	64	9	27	0	0	3	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	64	10	30	0	0	2	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	58	13	39	0	0	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	64	11	33	0	0	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	66	11	34	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Graffham Infant School, Graffham GU28 0NJ

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit. I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about all the exciting things you do and a special thank you for letting me join you for a cup of coffee in the forest. I am sure you will not be surprised to hear that I have said that you go to an outstanding school. This is because you are taught well and so your outcomes by the time you leave are excellent. These are some of things I have said are particularly good.

- Those of you who are beginning school in the Reception have an outstanding start.
- Your behaviour is excellent just as you said it was. I could see how much you enjoy your work and how well you concentrate in lessons. It was great to see you all getting on so well with each other.
- Your teachers know how to make lessons exciting and purposeful but you help by always trying to do your best and work hard. The range of activities, topics, visits and visitors all ensure that the whole curriculum is of very high quality.
- You are looked after extremely well so that you all have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy.
- Your headteacher has made sure that all the staff work as a real team. This is making sure that you have the best possible start to your schooling.

Even in the best schools there are still some things which can be improved. I have asked that by the middle of next year your progress in mathematics is as good as it is in reading and writing. I have also asked the school to work hard at making sure you attend as often as possible. You can help by continuing to work hard and ensuring you get to school every day.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Collard

Lead inspector

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