

Grange Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126207
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	360019
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Elliott
Headteacher	Christine Parkyn
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons led by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, pupils' work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 135 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from pupils and the school staff.

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

- Whether all leaders and the governing body are successful enough in raising expectations and the level of challenge for different ability groups, in order to lift achievement.
- How far lesson planning and assessment are centred firmly on the skills each pupil has to develop and whether there is enough useful feedback to pupils to show them how to improve their work.
- The degree to which the school has strong enough links with groups in other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas to enable pupils to understand the diversity of cultures, faiths and societies they will meet.

Information about the school

Grange Junior is a large school. Most pupils are from White British families and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have visual impairment, speech, language and communication needs or some form of learning difficulty. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well below average.

The school has been awarded Healthy School, Eco-school and International School status. There has been a significant change in staff, including senior leaders and members of the governing body, since the previous 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Grange Junior is a good school. It has a number of strengths, including pupils' outstanding behaviour and high levels of attendance, both of which reflect the pupils' thorough enjoyment of school. After a period when progress faltered due to significant changes in staffing, senior leaders have successfully restored the trend to above-average attainment and good progress. The robust and accurate school self-evaluation has enabled the school to tackle any shortcomings promptly and effectively, maintaining high morale among staff and an ambitious drive to improve. The school improvement priorities are well chosen. Enthusiasm to meet challenges pervades the staff and pupils. Senior and middle leaders provide an energetic drive for improvement. The capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Senior leaders and the governing body recognise that the work of improvement continues. The governing body has evaluated its own work and identified opportunities for further training in order to sharpen its probing of the school's performance. While it is supportive, involved and informed, much of its understanding of the school's effectiveness is based on the evaluations of others rather than its own investigations.

The improvement of teaching and learning has been managed well, so that these are now good. Inspectors viewed a large proportion of effective teaching during the visit and the pupils' books demonstrate that this is commonplace. Lesson planning is thorough and work is matched well to each pupil's ability. The methods of sharing targets for learning and involving the pupils themselves in the assessment of achievement are inconsistent. There is some good practice, but it is not yet universal.

The curriculum is wide ranging and rich, with some high-quality out-of-school activities. The visit to Wembley Stadium for a national finals match was a particularly successful event, in which the school was featured prominently in the match programme. The annual musical productions are also clearly held in high esteem by the community. Links between subjects to encourage pupils to research, enquire, investigate and problem solve are not fully developed. There are examples of well-planned links, with activities that enthuse the pupils greatly, but there is also some repetition of fairly routine tasks in mathematics, for example. However, the work is planned carefully to meet the needs of different abilities and the setting system for English and mathematics is very effective in enabling good progress to be made.

All staff provide good care, guidance and support for pupils, so that, regardless of background, need or ability, pupils can succeed in their work. The pupils are encouraged to be kind, considerate and polite, which they are. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is equally effective. All this was summed up by one pupil who said with feeling, 'I feel special.'

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share targets for learning consistently with pupils and give them ample opportunities to evaluate their own, and others' achievements and to identify the next steps for further improvement.
- Forge stronger links across the curriculum to underpin pupils' research, enquiry, investigation and problem-solving skills.
- Enable the governing body to hone its skills in evaluating school performance by providing appropriate training opportunities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good and is improving systematically through the school. In English, the pupils develop good writing skills and are able to write in a range of styles and for different purposes. Their books show that they take a pride in their work and that presentation and spelling are good. Likewise, in mathematics, pupils develop accurate and reliable basic skills, although investigation and problem-solving activities are not widespread, so progress in these aspects is less rapid, albeit satisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils are catered for well, with good levels of challenge, so that, by Year 6, a significant proportion are working at the higher level in both English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well also. That was recognised by several parents and carers in their response to the inspection questionnaire. The efficient use of staffing and the ability setting system contribute well to those pupils' successes.

Pupils' achievement in other subjects is also good. There is ample evidence around the school of good-quality artwork and a strong musical tradition results in some stirring music achievement. There is similarly a pattern of markedly good achievement in physical education and sports. The school trophy cabinet is full. Such experience and achievement contribute well to pupils' good awareness of maintaining healthy lifestyles, as demonstrated by the school's Healthy School status. Pupils say there are times when they do not eat healthily enough, although they know they should.

The great enjoyment of school extends beyond academic work. The pupils are virtually unanimous that they are kept safe and secure in school, in part because they trust each other and collaborate successfully. Bullying is rare and not perceived as a problem. Relationships between pupils and with the staff are warm, friendly and supportive. The pupils relate well also to members of the wider community. They meet many people from other walks of life who come to school or are visited in order to share experiences and fun activities. Most of such community links are locally based rather than with other parts of the United Kingdom, although pupils have a strong grounding in overseas community traditions too. The pupils are able to work in teams, accept responsibility for their conduct and work, and show independence and enterprise. Collectively, the pupils are a fount of good ideas for the improvement of their school and the enjoyment of learning. As the Eco-school status shows, they seek ways to improve their environment.

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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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	1
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 usually brisk, purposeful and productive sessions, which the pupils enjoy. The friendly rapport between teacher and pupils is a significant factor in the good quality of learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well for the majority of their time, although occasionally, during the introductions to lessons, they are not involved fully in pupils' learning. Senior leaders recognise that as an area for improvement that will benefit learning and already have useful ideas for the necessary staff development.

Assessment is checked carefully to ensure it is accurate. There is an appropriately cautious approach to judging pupils' work in terms of National Curriculum levels that adds to its reliability. The results of assessment are used well to group pupils by ability and need and to plan work with necessary challenge. Most lessons have a clearly stated learning objective that is shared with the pupils, although this is sometimes related more to the content that will be taught rather than the skills and knowledge to be learned. Beyond this, the ongoing review by pupils of their own and others' achievement is relatively infrequent. The marking of work is not geared enough to the identification of the next steps in learning that will lead to increased achievement.

It is evident from pupils' books and displays that pupils enjoy the cross-subject themes they study particularly. However, the themes are not yet frequent enough and the opportunities to develop fully the skills of independent learning, adventurous investigation and complicated problem solving are not maximised. A planned review of the curriculum is

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scheduled shortly that will involve pupils in the planning of work and will seek enhanced cross-subject links. This is a timely response by school leaders.

The school works effectively with a range of partners to ensure pupils' care and well-being. Currently, school leaders are working to extend a partnership with the local infant school to enhance transition from Years 2 to 3 so that pupils experience a seamless education throughout the primary phase. This work included a highly attended and well-received meeting for parents and carers of prospective Year 3 pupils during the inspection. School breaks are well supervised, with trained first-aiders present, and the pupils understand the procedures in case of accident or other incident.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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 headteacher and new deputy headteacher have quickly developed a very effective working partnership that is based on shared high expectations and ambitious targets. They have enthused staff to take on challenges and to work successfully for improvement. Thus, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and continues to do so. School self-evaluation is based on thorough analysis of pupils' progress and detailed monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. That enables the school improvement plan to focus on sensible and appropriate priorities for improvement. The governing body shares the same outlook and enthusiasm for improvement, although it is less experienced in evaluating the school's actual performance. Despite this, the governing body ensures all statutory duties are met, including those applying to the safeguarding of pupils, which is watchful and rigorous.

The promotion of community cohesion is good rather than outstanding because links with communities representing contrasting faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom, while appropriate, are not yet as rich as those with other communities. For example, there are very strong and beneficial links between the pupils and people in a significant number of overseas countries. The partnerships with local communities also celebrate their beliefs, culture and lifestyles well. The school has developed partnerships with local schools, the local authority and other groups that enable it to enrich the curriculum, especially the out-of-school activities. The support from former pupils, some of whom are now adult, is particularly advantageous in setting aspirational role models for the pupils.

The promotion of equal opportunities is effective because all pupils benefit from good quality provision and make brisk progress in both their academic and personal development. The school has made good improvement to the progress of higher- and

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lower-attainers and is currently proving successful in raising the achievement of middle-attainers. There is no tolerance of discrimination, whatever its form.

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	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	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	2

Views of parents and carers

About 40% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is above the usual proportion for a primary school. They hold positive views of the school, although there are a few concerns. The chief of these relate to communication with parents and carers, the range of out-of-school activities and how effectively the school meets their children's individual needs. Inspectors found the school offers appropriate opportunities through meetings and written information for parents and carers to help them form a helpful partnership in their children's education. Inspectors judge that the range of out-of-school activities is good for a primary school. While in the past pupils' progress slowed, it is now good again because the school is matching work and teaching support effectively to pupils' individual needs. Several comments praised the school, the staff and the quality of teaching.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grange 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 135 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 328 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	34	82	61	7	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	46	70	52	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	27	84	62	13	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	30	86	64	9	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	35	81	60	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	26	74	55	25	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	25	85	63	12	9	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)	37	27	85	63	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	30	79	59	11	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	27	79	59	9	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	19	78	58	13	10	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	32	24	82	61	12	9	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	39	72	53	8	6	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	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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Junior School, Swindon SN3 4JY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and discovering your views of the school. You helped us find out many things and judge that you go to a good school. In our report, we have identified many good things at Grange Junior School. The chief ones are:

- You make good progress and do well in your work.
- You are well taught and your lessons are enjoyable and often fun.
- You behave impeccably.
- Your attendance levels are high.
- Your teachers take good care of you so you feel safe and secure in school.
- The out-of-school activities provided for you are very popular and enjoyable.
- Your school is well led and managed.

We have also included three main improvements for the future:

- You should have more time to talk to each other and your teachers about how well you think you are learning and how to do even better.
- There should be more work in all subjects where you have to research, discover, investigate or solve problems.
- The school governing body should do more for itself to find out how well you are doing in school.

We know you will help your teachers make these improvements. You could start by making a list of the ways you learn best. Share this list with your parents, carers and teachers.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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