

Grasmere CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112319
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	363790
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Cameron Butland
Headteacher	Mrs Johanna Goode
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
School address	Stock Lane Grasmere, Ambleside Cumbria LA22 9SJ
Telephone number	01539 435313
Fax number	01539 435313
Email address	admin@grasmere.cumbria.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Inspection number	363790

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 two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in eight lessons and saw five teachers teach. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation. They analysed 33 questionnaires from parents and carers and also others from pupils and staff.

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

- The features of the school which support its own judgement that overall effectiveness is outstanding.
- Whether all groups of pupils make at least good and sometimes exemplary progress.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to ensure pupils attend school regularly.
- The quality of the provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a well-below-average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language. A below-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has gained Healthy Schools status. An after-school club runs on weekdays during term-time.

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. Pupils, parents and carers, staff and the governing body all speak very highly of the shared values, high expectations and excellent leadership which make this school an extremely safe, caring, and exciting place to learn. Children get an excellent to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes and they continue to make at least good and often exemplary progress as they move through the school so that their attainment is above average when they leave Year 6. Pupils make the rapid progress because teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. The assessment of pupils' work is good, but the school recognises that, if best practice is shared more widely, pupils will have an even better understanding of precisely how to improve their work. A rich and vibrant curriculum which includes many fascinating opportunities to visit places locally and further afield means pupils are given memorable experiences which enrich their learning. All pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in every area of school life and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

The school has many great strengths, which are much appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers, in:

- the outstanding care, guidance and support it gives to pupils
- the way it develops pupils' personal qualities so their behaviour is outstanding, they make an excellent contribution to their own and the wider community and they have an impressive understanding of how to stay safe and healthy
- the excellent links it forges with parents and carers and other partners, all of which support pupils' learning and their personal development very well.

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils' progress has accelerated. Leadership and management and governance are outstanding. Leaders, managers and the governing body monitor the school's work extremely closely. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. There is a very clear agenda for school improvement and appropriate priorities have been identified. Consequently, the school has excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

Most pupils attend school regularly, but last year attendance dropped markedly, partly because of pupils taking holidays during term-time. Attendance this year has now begun to rise and is above average. However the school recognises the need to continue to work with parents and carers to ensure they send their children to school regularly.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by working with parents and carers to ensure they send their children to school regularly.

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

- Raise the already good quality of assessment even further by:
 - spreading best practice across the school
 - ensuring all pupils receive high-quality feedback so they know precisely how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In lessons, pupils work extremely hard. They are very confident and independent learners, who concentrate well, persevere with challenging tasks and are very keen to succeed. Older pupils were seen to be thoroughly enjoying their learning as they explored in great detail the route taken by the Thirlmere aqueduct. Pupils make at least good and often exceptional progress and their achievement is outstanding. Work in pupils' books, that displayed on walls and the school's own detailed tracking system all confirm the rapid progress that pupils make. Children enter the Nursery class with skills levels which are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although they fluctuate widely from year to year. From their individual starting points, pupils make outstanding progress so their attainment in tests in English and mathematics is above average when they leave the school. Current pupils are on track to reach or exceed their challenging targets this year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very timely and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants so they make the same excellent progress as their peers.

Pupils are entirely clear about how to stay safe and healthy. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and is supported well by close links with the local church. Pupils are extremely proud of belonging to Grasmere Primary and make an outstanding contribution both to their own school and to the wider community. They have good basic skills, are punctual, work very well in teams and use information and communication technology (ICT) very confidently. Consequently, they are well prepared for future life and for the next steps in their education. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils of all ages care for each other, support each other in class, are respectful to staff and are extremely welcoming and kind to visitors.

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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	2
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 consistently good throughout the school and much of it is outstanding. Teachers manage their mixed-age classes with exceptional skill and match work very carefully to the specific needs of individual children. A huge variety of stimulating activities engages pupils' interest so they enjoy learning greatly. Pupils speak enthusiastically about what they learnt from exciting activities as varied as participating in a memorable production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to following a river from its source to the sea. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, brisk lessons, challenging tasks and perceptive questioning all contribute to the outstanding learning which takes place. Books are marked regularly and there are many examples of highly effective assessment practice throughout the school. However, the best practice is not yet shared sufficiently so that all pupils are absolutely sure how to improve their work even further.

The outstanding curriculum provides a huge range of exciting experiences for pupils. Pupils talk with equal enthusiasm about visits to London and walks to the local tarn. Numerous staff and visitors to the school include specialist music teachers, student volunteers, members of the local community and parents and carers who all share their expertise and experience and enrich the curriculum. Subjects are linked together very successfully around common themes and are made very relevant by being based on the local area or visits to places of interest.

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

The provision of outstanding care, guidance and support is at the heart of the school's work. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the way in which the school develops their children's widely differing skills and talents and builds their confidence and self-esteem through the care and support it provides. Transition arrangements are excellent and pupils move very smoothly from one stage of their education to the next. The school makes excellent use of the expertise of outside agencies and that of its own staff to ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, receive the very best support. Pupils and their parents and carers are very appreciative of the care provided by the well-run after-school club which offers a variety of sporting, artistic and practical activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, leaders and managers have an extremely clear vision for further school improvement. It is shared entirely by all staff, who feel their views are valued and respected. Consequently, morale is very high. Leaders and managers have considerable expertise, for example in teaching mixed-age classes and in the assessment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which they share beyond their own school. Governance is outstanding. The governing body makes an exceptional contribution to the work and direction of the school. It has a very clear strategic view for the school and is involved fully in monitoring the school's work. Good practice is followed in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff are highly vigilant in ensuring pupils are safe on a difficult school site which has a right of way for vehicles crossing the playground. Outstanding links with partners, local organisations such as the Wordsworth Trust, specialist agencies and with parents and carers both enhance the curriculum and provide further support for pupils' learning. All pupils are given excellent equal opportunities to be involved fully in every aspect of school life. The school promotes community cohesion well. It has close links with the local community and good developing links with schools and communities in London, Australia and South Africa. For example, during the inspection a visiting group of South African headteachers was sharing its expertise with that of leaders and managers at the 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

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	1
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

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels broadly in line with those expected for their age, although as the numbers of children in each cohort are very small this varies widely from year to year. Children make at least good and often exceptional progress from their individual starting points. Many children demonstrate outstanding progress in developing the skills which will help them in the future. Outstanding leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that work is tailored expertly to children's needs. All staff are deployed extremely well and outstanding practice in teaching is shared very effectively. Consequently, children settle into school routines quickly and show high levels of independence, curiosity and concentration. They enjoy an excellent balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities thoroughly. The school works hard to provide an excellent range of opportunities for outdoor learning, in spite of the difficulties presented by the school site which does not allow free-flow between the indoor and outdoor learning areas. A group of boys was making excellent progress in their learning as, having seen Wimbledon on the television, they practised their 'tennis' skills, worked out where the 'court' was and deliberated on what to use for a 'net'.

Children feel very safe in this hugely supportive and caring environment. Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent and they are kept very well-informed so they can support their children's learning fully.

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 the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
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

Of the high proportion of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority is extremely pleased with the education the school provides. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise of the outstanding care, guidance and support their children receive, of how safe children feel and of the excellent leadership of the headteacher. They speak highly of the quality of teaching and of the rapid progress their children make. Inspectors endorse those views. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns about the management of pupils' behaviour and that work for more-able pupils lacked challenge. Inspectors found work to be matched closely to pupils' needs so that they made at least good and often outstanding progress. Behaviour was found to be outstanding and to be managed expertly by all staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grasmere CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 54 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	91	3	9	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	70	9	27	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	70	5	15	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	79	6	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	76	4	12	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	73	5	15	2	6	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)	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	76	5	15	2	6	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	79	3	9	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	70	10	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	82	6	18	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	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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grasmere C of E Primary School, Ambleside, LA22 9SJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. A particular thank you to all those of you who spoke with us and told us with such enthusiasm about all the things you really enjoy doing at school. Please thank your parents and carers for speaking with us and for filling in our questionnaire.

These are some of the things we have said in our inspection report.

- Yours is an outstanding school where you make excellent progress and reach above-average attainment.
- You get an excellent start to your education in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You receive teaching, care guidance and support, and a curriculum that are all outstanding.
- The leadership and management of your school is outstanding.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work extremely hard in lessons.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- Work with your parents and carers to make sure you all attend school regularly.
- Give you even more guidance on precisely how to improve your work.

You can all help your school to be even better by making sure you attend regularly and continuing to work with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Wallis

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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.