

Grimsdyke School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102187
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	376679
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Poole
Headteacher	Gwenda Caroli
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 27 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and various members of staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including the school development plan, policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding of pupils and information about their attainment and progress. Inspectors also considered the views of staff, pupils and 220 parents and carers expressed in their responses to questionnaires.

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

- The reason for the dip in attainment and progress in writing in 2011 and whether pupils are making good progress in this area.
- The extent to which all groups of pupils from different backgrounds and with different needs are achieving equally well.
- The extent to which attendance has improved and whether the improvement is likely to be maintained.

Information about the school

Grimsdyke is larger than most schools of its kind. As a result of reorganisation in Harrow, it became a primary school in September 2010 and changed its name. About a third of pupils are of White British origin, a further third of Indian heritage and the remainder from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. A significant minority of pupils speak English as an additional language but few are at the early stages of learning the language. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties and/or speech and communication problems. The school has gained Healthy Schools and Artsmark Gold status. The school runs a breakfast club. An after-school club is run by a private provider and is subject to a separate 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Grimsdyke is an outstanding school. Pupils are proud of their school and most parents and carers hold it in high regard. One commented, 'We have been very pleased with Grimsdyke School and how the teachers encourage and motivate our children to learn.' This was typical of the views of others. Good at its last inspection, the school has consolidated and built on its many strengths. The headteacher has led the drive for further improvement and the governing body and leaders at all levels have high aspirations for the school which is reflected in its everyday life. Thorough self-evaluation enables them to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and to tackle weaknesses successfully. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed effectively and pupils achieve outstandingly well. Consequently, the school has an outstanding capacity to maintain and build even further on its improvements.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is an extremely harmonious community with pupils from a wide range of backgrounds getting on very well together. Pupils are unfailingly friendly and polite and behave extremely well. They feel very safe in school and have great confidence in the adults around them. Walking down the corridor with the lead inspector, one younger pupil, after holding the door open, commented 'I love this school because you feel very safe'. This was a sentiment expressed by all the pupils spoken to by inspectors. It is a reflection of the excellent levels of care, guidance and support provided for them and the considerable lengths that are taken to ensure they are safe and protected. Pupils really enjoy their education largely because of a rich and vibrant curriculum which provides them with memorable experiences, for example in music and sport. The latter helps pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles extremely well, and is indicative of the excellent partnerships which considerably enhance the school's work. This commitment to enrichment is reflected in the school's national awards.

Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is high. Together with their very positive attitudes to learning, good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and above average attendance, this ensures that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world beyond. Children get off to a good start in the lively and stimulating Early Years Foundation Stage. Thereafter, good teaching enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from a wide variety of backgrounds, to make consistently good progress. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and generally plan well to meet their wide-ranging needs. Occasionally, they talk for too long, especially at the beginning of lessons, and do not

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give pupils sufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas and to be fully engaged in their learning.

Pupils' good progress is also supported very well by effective systems to track their progress. This enables school leaders to identify any potential underachievement at an early stage and put support in place to enable those at risk to catch up. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously through a good range of strategies and there is a successful, shared commitment to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. The curriculum teams, for example, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and support the headteacher and senior leaders very effectively to embed the school's ambition and drive improvements. The governing body supports and challenges leaders unflinchingly. In consequence, the school is very effective in achieving its mission of 'learning and achieving together'. By way of illustration, one parent commented, 'We are repeatedly complimented on how well our children think, read and speak when we visit relatives and friends.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 50% of lessons are outstanding by December 2012 through:
 - consistently providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas and to be active participants in their learning
 - ensuring that whole-class introductions are not too long and meet the full range of needs in the class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

When they join the school children's skills and understanding are wide ranging but often above expectations for their age. They quickly become enthusiastic learners and enjoy the many different facets of their work as they move through the school. They cooperate and collaborate very well in pairs and groups and strive to do their best. They respond well to their teachers' questions often providing thoughtful, articulate answers. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to be actively engaged in their learning, for example in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when they were busily engaged in measuring a range of objects in the classroom. They worked very sensibly in pairs to decide whether a trundle wheel, metre stick or tape measure was the most suitable for each measurement. They made good progress, particularly in understanding the need for precision in their work.

As a result of their good progress, pupils' attainment has been high for a number of years with the majority reaching the highest level possible in national tests. There was a dip in 2011, notably in writing for boys. Although this group of pupils started from a lower point at the end of Year 2, progress in writing, particularly for boys, in

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Key Stage 2 was much slower than in reading and mathematics. However, as a result of a number of initiatives pupils are now making good progress in writing. There is a particular drive to make writing interesting and relevant for boys in particular. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were creating and describing an alien. They were enthusiastic and used a range of interesting and powerful language. This activity was particularly effective in motivating the boys to write.

Groups from a wide range of backgrounds make equally good progress, with those of Indian heritage doing especially well. Pupils with moderate learning problems and speech and communication difficulties make good progress because the work is tailored to meet their needs and they receive good support in lessons. One pupil, supported by others, expressed the view that ‘no-one is left out in lessons’.

Pupils treat each other and adults with great respect. They are extremely courteous and behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Virtually all pupils and their parents and carers believe that they are safe in school. Pupils are confident that bullying occurs only rarely and if it does it is dealt with swiftly and effectively because ‘teachers care for us’. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils take their many responsibilities around school, for example as school councillors and play leaders, very seriously and believe that their ‘voice’ is heard, for example in creating the ‘behaviour steps’. They also raise money for a range of charities although their contribution to the wider community is less marked.

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	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

The school’s provision enables pupils to achieve extremely well in basic skills as well as helping them to develop strong personal qualities and to become confident and enthusiastic learners. As one pupil put it, ‘They try to make learning fun’. Good links are made between different aspects of the curriculum which help pupils to see how their learning fits together. For example, at the start of an outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils were greeted by a ‘blacked out’ classroom with air raid sirens sounding. This set the scene for some evocative poetry based on the Blitz which supported their topic on the Second World War. The curriculum is considerably enriched through themed weeks, visits, visitors and modern foreign languages. The specialist provision in music and sport considerably enhances pupils’ enjoyment and achievement in these areas. The sight of the large choir singing ‘Thumbelina’ tunefully and enthusiastically was impressive.

In the classroom, teachers have a productive partnership with teaching assistants who make a considerable contribution to the quality of learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use ICT effectively to enhance learning. This was evident in an outstanding phonics (sounds and letters) lesson in Year 1 where the teacher’s very good subject knowledge, a range of interesting activities and focused teaching enabled all pupils to make very good progress in their reading skills. Teachers mark pupils’ work conscientiously, mostly providing good guidance on how pupils might improve and reach their targets. Sometimes, however, teachers’ introductions to lessons are too long and pupils are asked to sit without active participation. When this occurs, the needs of pupils of different abilities are not fully met and pupils do not have the opportunity to consolidate their learning through discussion or activity.

The care and nurture of every pupil are at the heart of the school’s work. Every pupil is known as an individual and their needs met. There are very good levels of support, for example through the learning mentors, for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The popular breakfast club is well run and provides an invaluable service to pupils and their families. Procedures for dealing with any poor behaviour are very effective and clearly understood. As one pupil put it, ‘Since the behaviour charts have got going, our behaviour has improved.’ The high profile given to attendance and punctuality over the last year, in particular, has had a significant impact on raising levels of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has led the school successfully since the previous inspection and has high expectations of everybody in the school community. She has developed the roles of senior and middle leaders and all share a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to meeting the challenging targets set out in the school’s plans. Leaders conduct a wide range of monitoring activities and have created a climate where teachers support each other and constantly strive to improve their own practice. Consequently, outcomes for pupils are high and the quality of provision is improving. Members of the governing body bring a wide range of expertise to their roles. They are extremely well organised and are comfortable in providing high levels of professional challenge to leaders. They play a significant role in setting the strategic direction of the school.

The school’s provision is significantly enhanced by partnerships to support pupils’ welfare and learning. In particular, links with sports providers, the music service and the local high school provide opportunities for pupils that they would not otherwise have. Additionally the involvement in the ‘City Challenge’ project illustrates the school’s commitment to improvement. The school engages well with most parent and carers and has done a great deal to develop the partnership further since the previous inspection. A Parents’ Forum has been established, parents and carers are involved in school development planning and workshops about different aspects of the curriculum are a regular feature of school life. Parents’ and carers’ views on different aspects of school life are sought and acted upon. For example one parent commented on how the school had implemented her suggestions for a ‘praise and reward’ behaviour scheme that was adopted immediately.

The school’s policies and practices in relation to the safeguarding of children are exemplary and are a high priority for everybody at the school. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among staff and quality assurance and risk assessment procedures are excellent. The school is a national leader of high quality practice and offers advice to others in this capacity. The school is conspicuously successful in eradicating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. As a result all groups of pupils achieve well. The school promotes community cohesion well. The impact of this is felt mostly in the school, which is a harmonious and diverse community, as well as the local area. Grimsdyke also has links with a school in India but its strategy at the national and global levels is less well developed.

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

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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	2
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	1
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 make good progress in the Reception classes from their starting points. By the time they move into Year 1 their attainment is well above average in all areas of their learning. A warm and welcoming environment helps children to settle quickly and to become eager and confident learners. A ‘show and tell’ session, for example, illustrated clearly that children were becoming good listeners and developing confidence in talking to the group. Thorough planning ensures that children gain experience in all areas of their learning. There is a good emphasis on early reading and counting skills in focused sessions led by the adults. In these it is evident that teachers have a good understanding of how children develop these skills. There are also opportunities for pupils to explore the exciting activities in the well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas for themselves.

Children’s progress is assessed very carefully in their ‘Learning Journeys’ and this information is used well to plan for further learning. Teachers have high expectations of their children and targets are set soon after their arrival. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to question children in order to develop their learning even further. All staff have high regard for children’s safety and welfare and procedures are robust. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator is temporarily away from school and the headteacher is leading developments well in her absence in partnership with the enthusiastic team. There are good relationships with parents and carers and a number commented on how well their children had settled in. The work in Reception is monitored rigorously but data are not yet utilised to their full capacity to secure the children’s baseline and to track their progress accurately as they move through the year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Taking into account:	2
	1

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

More than half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire which is higher than usual. Of these almost all believe that their children enjoy their learning, are safe at school and helped to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Comments such as 'Both my children look forward to school every day. They love their friends, teachers and school' were typical of the views expressed. Most are supportive of the school in response to the remaining questions. Where they added comments these tended to praise the school's caring atmosphere and the effectiveness of communication. A number reiterated how much their children enjoy school. A small minority of parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction in their responses. These tended to centre around the leadership and communication in the school. A number do not feel that their children have made enough progress and are not being well enough prepared for the future. Inspectors found leadership at all levels and of governors to be outstanding. They found that communication was regular and informative and that the school does a great deal to communicate its policies and curriculum to parents and carers. They also found that pupils make good progress and achieve outstandingly well, reaching levels of attainment that are much higher than in most schools. This prepares them extremely well for the next stages of their education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grimsdyke 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 220 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 417 pupils registered at the school.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	124	56	93	42	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	128	58	86	39	5	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	23	140	64	17	8	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	26	120	55	22	10	9	4
The teaching is good at this school	61	28	132	60	16	7	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	29	116	53	27	12	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	79	36	126	57	7	3	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)	50	23	114	52	26	12	6	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	26	118	54	23	10	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	34	102	26	22	10	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	21	119	54	29	13	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	63	29	112	51	25	11	7	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	38	117	53	15	7	4	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grimsdyke School, Pinner HA5 4QE

You may remember that I visited Grimsdyke School recently with three other inspectors. I am writing to thank you all for being so polite, friendly and helpful and telling us about your school. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You are rightly proud of your school because it is outstanding. You make good progress in English and mathematics because the teaching is good. By the time you leave the school you are reaching high levels of attainment. You also enjoy your learning and have good computer skills. This means that you are very well prepared for the next steps in your education.

We were very impressed with your behaviour which we judged to be excellent. You told us how safe you feel at school and we found that all the adults at school look after you very well. You also told us how much you enjoy all the extra activities you have to do in music and sport, for example. These also help you to develop skills in lots of areas and to keep very fit and healthy. We were pleased that your attendance improved last year. You can help to keep this up by making sure that you come to school regularly and on time unless you are ill.

The headteacher, with the support of all the staff and governors, works hard to provide you with an outstanding education. They recognise that even in an outstanding school some things could be better. We have asked them to do one thing which will help you to make even better progress.

- Although teaching is good we have challenged the school to make half of lessons outstanding by December 2012. We have asked teachers to make sure that they do not talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and give you plenty of chances to discuss your ideas and take part actively.

Best wishes to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee
Lead inspector

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