



Office for Standards  
in Education

# **Inspection Report**

## **GRAFFHAM FIRST SCHOOL**

Unique Reference Number: 125831  
LEA: West Sussex

Inspection Dates: 21 – 24 June 2004  
Reporting Inspector: Gehane Gordelier HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was  
deemed section 12 (3) under the same act

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Graffham First School and West Sussex local education authority.

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an independent lay inspector carried out the inspection.

### **Key for inspection grades:**

Grade 1	Very good
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Not adequate

### **Description of the school**

Graffham First is a small village school. It caters for pupils from five to ten years of age. There are currently 47 pupils on roll. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national figure. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All of the pupils speak English as their first language even though there is a small number of minority ethnic pupils. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including those with a statement of need, is above the national average.

The headteacher is taking up a new post in a different school in September 2004. As well as retaining the responsibility for his own school, the headteacher of a nearby school will also become responsible for leading and managing Graffham First School. This arrangement is a trial and is scheduled to be reviewed by the governing body at the end of the academic year in 2005.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Effectiveness of the school**

This is a good school. The emphasis on promoting good personal development and creating a secure family atmosphere enables pupils to make good gains in their learning. They reach above average standards overall and do extremely well in reading and writing. Pupils flourish in a caring environment where they feel safe and at home. They behave very well and are attentive in lessons. Teaching is good and pupils enjoy learning. The school provides pupils with broad and rich learning experiences. However, occasionally there could be more challenge for the brightest pupils. The commitment of the school's good leadership to raising standards and school improvement has created a school which knows itself well. The school provides good value for money.

**Grade: 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Issues raised during the last inspection have been addressed well. Learning intentions for lessons are clear and assessment procedures are now good. The school makes very good use of data to set meaningful targets and track individual pupil's progress. It has developed a good range of strategies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, standards have risen, and the school has exceeded its challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics for the last two years. The governing body now meet statutory requirements with regard to SEN. However, since the last inspection rates of attendance have declined.

**Grade: 2**

### **Capacity to improve**

The school has developed and implemented a good range of strategies, which promote school improvement well. The school's capacity to improve is good. When the headteacher leaves, the governors are well aware that the systems and structures that are currently in place should be maintained and developed.

Currently the governing body is mainly led by the headteacher. Governors need to develop their role as 'critical friend' and provide the school with additional challenge in the future. In addition, they need to ensure that the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and school self-evaluation reflect an appropriate focus on the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement.

**Grade: 2**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Within this very positive picture the school should:

- ensure there are extension and enrichment opportunities for the highest attaining pupils

- revise the school improvement plan so that initiatives are prioritised and that they relate directly to raising achievement
- raise attendance.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

The standards achieved by pupils are good overall. Results from national tests for seven year olds show good improvement over recent years at a rate better than the national average. Throughout the school, pupils make particularly good progress in English and they do quite well in mathematics. This is due to successful teaching and the fact that the headteacher rigorously checks the progress pupils make. She is aware that pupils do not progress as well in science and steps are being taken to address this. Pupils with SEN receive effective support and make good progress particularly in writing and reading. Displays around the school show high quality work in drawing, painting and textiles.

**Grade: 2**

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Pupils' personal development is good. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. They enjoy coming to school, are keen and enthusiastic and rapidly become confident learners. Pupils are kind, caring and considerate towards each other and adults. They are encouraged to take on increasing levels of responsibility as they progress through the school and this helps them to mature and develop into responsible young people. They learn about different countries and customs and are respectful of other faiths and cultures. The provision for pupils' physical development is good overall. This is enhanced by the use of professional coaches, after school clubs and the new multi-sports arena in the grounds.

Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for their spiritual development, particularly through assemblies. They are also encouraged to become involved in school life and the local community. Consequently, the school plays an important role in the local community and pupils participate well and contribute enthusiastically to local events, developments and festivals. This has helped to raise standards and develop pupils' self-confidence. A good example of this is pupils developing their skills in music and drama by working with musicians and drama experts, along with a small group of schools, for a performance of Figaro at the Chichester Festival Theatre.

Attendance is only adequate. This is largely due to the number of pupils who take holidays during term time. The staff has identified the need to review their policy on attendance.

**Grade: 2**

## **QUALITY OF PROVISION**

The good teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. This has been helped by the thorough and constructive way the headteacher monitors lessons, as well as the opportunity for teachers to observe peers and share good practice. Pupils talk animatedly about their lessons, how well they are doing and how hard they have to work to meet their targets.

An English lesson provided a good example of what the school does well. The lesson got off to a brisk start with a quick session on letter sounds. The teaching assistants provided the younger pupils with very good support in the correct formation of letters and reinforced the difference between the names of letters, and the sound they make. The second part of the lesson included a story, which later formed the basis of pupils' written work. There was effective use of drama to inspire the higher attaining pupils to draft post cards as though they were written by one of the characters in the story. Computers were used well to engage and motivate pupils to draft their writing.

The teaching assistants are skilled at providing worthwhile activities that help SEN pupils make real progress alongside their peers. This ensures that pupils with SEN receive good support.

Where there are weaknesses in the teaching, there are missed opportunities for pupils to discuss work in pairs and occasionally more could be expected of brighter pupils.

The school provides a broad and rich curriculum and good links are made between subjects. There is also a good emphasis on pupils learning from first hand experiences with visits to places of interest and annual, four day residential visits to other locations in England. The inspiration a visit to a canal and working with a local canal artist provided was evident in a colourful display of pupils' work in art. The pupils recalled what they had seen and learnt about locks and cogs; this linked well to their work about forces in science.

Subjects are generally well planned, although there is scope for ensuring a more consistent approach to preparing challenging tasks for the highest attaining pupils.

The staff work effectively together to provide very good care for all pupils, whatever their needs. Child protection procedures are in place. The staff ensure that pupils work in a safe environment, both in school and on visits, such as the recent residential trip to Bath. The support and guidance for pupils are very good and their targets, in particular, tell them how well they are doing and encourage them to strive to do better. These systems make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make.

The school promotes healthy living well through many subjects, such as science, physical education and design and technology. This enables pupils to understand the importance of being healthy.

**Grade: 2**

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The school is vibrant. Staff show a very good team spirit and they are committed to pupils learning through enjoyment. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, although this did not come through strongly in the text of the school self-evaluation form. The headteacher's judgements about the school are very secure and matched those of inspectors. She has implemented an appropriate range of strategies, which have improved the quality of teaching and learning and she provides a clear direction for the school. Good examples of this include:

- the development of bridging units in mathematics and science, with a group of local schools, to help pupils with continuity on transfer

- the correct identification of the need to develop strategies to promote higher standards in Religious Education.

The headteacher is passionate about tracking progress from year to year and this successfully drives school improvement. However, the governing body does not always maintain a strategic overview. There is insufficient focus in the school improvement plan of the impact of initiatives on raising standards. There is scope for co-ordinators to become more involved in leadership and management, for example by developing annual action plans for their areas of responsibility.

The school meets its responsibilities with regard to race equality and the requirements of the SEN and Disability Discrimination Acts. The headteacher is instrumental in promoting an inclusive environment where the needs of all pupils are taken into account.

Staff are appropriately deployed, the school is well resourced and the budget is very well managed.

**Grade: 2**

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