

# Grassmoor Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112553
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	289326
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Derek Schofield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Moorcroft
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	North Wingfield Road Grassmoor Chesterfield Derbyshire S42 5EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246850349
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 859119

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a former mining village near Chesterfield. The area has pockets of deprivation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and only a very small number have English as an additional language. The school has a National Healthy Schools Award and an Excellence Mark from the Derbyshire Anti Bullying Scheme.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Staff work hard to involve parents and carers in the education of their children and are caring and conscientious in their response to concerns raised by parents. The school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Most pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below average for their age, especially in their personal and social development and the ability to communicate with others. In the Foundation Stage they make satisfactory progress although by the time they enter Year 1 less achieve the targets expected of them than is the case nationally. In the 2006 Year 6 national tests, standards were very low and few pupils achieved at the higher levels. For the past two years the progress pupils made was affected by long-term staff absences. With recent staffing appointments the progress made is now more consistent. Pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory and standards are close to the national average although too few achieve the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily. Standards are lower in English than other subjects with few pupils writing well.

Pupils' personal development is good which helps them prepare well for their future. The large majority of pupils are well behaved and enjoy their time in school. Some parents perceive that there is bullying in school. While staff and pupils recognise that occasionally a very small number of the boys do not behave well, the school has worked very successfully to address such issues and to ensure safe practices. Pupils know how to lead a good healthy lifestyle and readily take on responsibilities as part of the school community.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Staff manage pupils well and explain things clearly to them. While most teachers plan activities carefully to meet the needs of groups of different abilities, pupils, particularly the younger pupils and those of higher ability, are often not sufficiently challenged. The curriculum is satisfactory but in the Foundation Stage activities are often unimaginative and do not motivate pupils to want to learn. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory, with pastoral care being good. The setting of individual targets that identify what pupils need to improve, are now established in English but not yet in other subjects.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior staff recognise that standards in the last two years have not been high enough and are addressing appropriate areas for development. School self evaluation is satisfactory. It is accurate and honest, and largely matches the findings of the inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, with the support of other staff, are working purposefully towards improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The school has developed procedures to monitor its work but this lacks evaluative rigour in identifying areas for further improvement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that pupils are provided with activities that meet the needs of different abilities, particularly those of higher ability.
- Extend the setting of individual targets in mathematics and science.

- Ensure that the activities for pupils in the Foundation Stage are imaginative, relevant and challenging.
- Extend the opportunities for staff and governors to monitor the effectiveness of the work of the school to identify further steps for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enter the Nursery with a range of early experiences but many have knowledge and skills that are below average for their age. Pupils are often quiet and passive and play alone or alongside others rather than with them. Their speaking skills are generally limited and many struggle to express their ideas and experiences in more than a few words. While many pupils achieve some of the targets for their age, when they enter Year 1 standards are still below average overall.

In recent years national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have shown standards to be variable and often below, and sometimes well below, average. In Year 2 standards have been slightly better in reading than writing. In Year 6, national test results in the last two years showed a significant fall. In 2006 standards were amongst the lowest 3% of schools nationally. Boys, and particularly those with learning difficulties, did much worse than similar pupils nationally. Few pupils attained above average standards. Tracking information shows that the progress pupils made was particularly affected during lengthy periods of staff absence. With permanent staffing arrangements now in place, assessments show that pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are making much more secure and consistent progress. Standards are now broadly average across the school but are generally weaker in writing than in other areas of learning. This affects the progress pupils make in other subjects as they lack the skills to record what they have found out. Boys and girls of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress, although some higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and as a result, attendance has improved and is currently above that in schools nationally. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, in Year 6 they demonstrate an abundance of vitality, control and spirituality when they perform their daily Tai Chi. These features seen in the pupils give them an excellent start to the school day and have been a significant factor in improving pupils' learning. Most pupils get on well, behave appropriately and act on a clear understanding of right and wrong. There is an increasing uptake of healthy lifestyles and good participation in extra-curricular sport with teams and individuals achieving many successes. Pupils know well how to keep safe and the work of the school council and the 'playground pals' enables them to make a good contribution to the school community. Positive attitudes to learning and the development of sound basic skills equip pupils satisfactorily for their on-going education and for the future world of work. However, the school does not yet prepare pupils well enough for life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society because they do not have enough opportunity to learn about other cultures.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Staff have good relationships with pupils who are generally keen to please the adults around them. When rare instances of mis-behaviour occur staff have well established strategies to deal with pupils firmly but fairly and lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Overall, teachers have satisfactory expectations of what pupils, including those with learning difficulties, can achieve. However, at times staff do not make the best use of assessment information to ensure that activities offer the highest appropriate level of challenge for all groups and particularly for the more able. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall; staff have warm and supportive relationships with those in their charge, which helps them settle well. However, not enough is expected of younger pupils and they are not always given sufficient opportunities to make choices in their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets National Curriculum requirements and there is a satisfactory emphasis on developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The school modifies its curriculum effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners. For example, there is evidence that recent initiatives to improve the performance of boys and to foster the abilities of potentially gifted or talented pupils are beginning to have a beneficial impact. The school enhances the basic curriculum by providing Tai Chi for all pupils and with a range of educational visits, special events, such as Big Arts weeks, and a range of extra-curricular activities, which together help to bring learning to life and add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage covers all of the required areas of learning and staff have increased the opportunities for pupils to take part in role-play activities. However, these are often adult led and there are not enough exciting and creative activities to stimulate pupil's imaginations and motivate them to play and learn independently.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. There are appropriate child protection procedures and the training of all staff on this and other matters, such as first aid is up to date. The school is conscientious in its response to any and all concerns raised by parents. There are satisfactory risk assessments on the premises and on most staff and pupil activities. Monitoring by senior staff ensures that safe practice is the norm. Pupils are cared for well. Skilled teaching assistants and a learning mentor provide support for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities and for those who are in any way vulnerable. Relationships are trusting and as a result, pupils say that they are confident that their concerns will be acted upon. Senior staff make good use of assessment data to set challenging targets for individuals and for groups of pupils. Pupils know their writing targets and are well-motivated to achieve them. However, this effective practice does not yet extend to other subjects. The marking of pupils' work sometimes misses the opportunity to identify what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The previous inspection identified that the senior management team was not effective enough in leading the school forward. Since then the school has struggled through lengthy periods of staff absence and there have been several changes including the work of the deputy headteacher. The deputy now plays a much greater role in leading and managing areas of the school's work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher now work effectively together and have an honest awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A lot of work has been undertaken recently to improve assessment procedures and the way in which staff track the progress pupils make, especially in English. The school has introduced opportunities for subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning in areas for which they hold responsibility. However, such work lacks the evaluative rigour to identify further areas for improvement. The current Foundation Stage leader has few opportunities to formally monitor effectiveness. This has been identified as an area to develop further in a forthcoming re-organisation of roles. Governance is satisfactory, although there is no formal programme of focused visits to enable governors to know more about the work of the school at first hand. This school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvements.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Grassmoor Primary School, North Wingfield Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S42 5EP

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, at lunchtime and when we spoke to the school council.

These are the things that we think are best:

- you like coming to school and most of you behave well
- you know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and particularly enjoy Tai chi
- you know how to keep safe and the anti-bullying work you have done is good
- staff look after you well and recognise when you need a bit of extra help.

These are the things we think could be improved:

- staff could help you do better in your writing by organising more challenging activities, especially for those who find learning easy
- the activities for children in Nursery and Reception could be more interesting and exciting
- the targets to help you improve your writing should be used in other subjects
- staff and governors should check what is happening in the school more often to see what can be improved.

Thank you again for helping us. Enjoy your time at Grassmoor and continue to do all you can to lead a healthy life.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector