



# Grange Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 117122  
**Local Authority** HERTFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 290730  
**Inspection dates** 16–17 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Robert Drew

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>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Sparhawke
<b>School category</b>	Community		Letchworth Garden City
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		Hertfordshire SG6 4PY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 621444
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	207	<b>Fax number</b>	01462 621544
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Taylor
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Sandell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
7–11	16–17 November 2006	290730

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Grange Junior is a smaller than average school on the northern outskirts of Letchworth Garden City. Pupils have broadly average attainment on entering the school. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average. There are more girls than boys in most year groups. The great majority are of White British backgrounds with very small numbers from several minority ethnic groups. No pupil is at an early stage of learning to speak English.

## **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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This reflects leadership and management which has strengths and weaknesses, but is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection, the headteacher and her colleagues have improved standards considerably and radically upgraded the school's facilities. While some recent Key Stage 2 results have been disappointing, standards for Year 6 pupils are now broadly average and progress is satisfactory. English standards are improving the most, with markedly better results in 2006 and momentum evident in the current work in Year 6. The decision to give additional support to lower attaining pupils in English was fully vindicated. The school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve, but challenges remain. Standards in science have not been high enough for some time, partly reflecting the under-use of data to identify problems. Another issue requiring urgent attention is that in all subjects too few pupils gain the higher levels.

Leadership and management have a satisfactory impact on standards and academic progress and have a good effect on pupils' personal development. This is because the school has an established track record of helping pupils feel secure, involving them in school life and supporting them well. It has built up good relationships with parents and with support services outside school. Pupils benefit particularly from the extensive sporting activities offered and from residential visits. The issues raised by the government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda have been taken to heart and, as a result, pupils are given more effective help than usual to learn about personal safety, how to eat healthily and lead active lives. The skill of combining learning and enjoyment is evident and pupils contribute well to their own school life and that of the wider community. Good care and support is now underpinned by satisfactory tracking of their academic progress. This aspect was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, but recent improvements in the use of data are helping to guide pupils more effectively.

Monitoring and support of teaching and the curriculum have been less effective, as is evident in the inconsistent quality of teaching and learning. Although the quality is satisfactory overall and good practice exists, strengths are not being noted and spread across the school. Aspects of weaker practice persist longer than they should. The intense engagement of pupils in strongly paced lessons is not replicated often enough. The very good use of plenary sessions seen in some lessons is countered by the absence of good summing up at the end of other lessons. Teachers' questioning sometimes challenges able pupils to think more deeply and respond in great detail, but this is not sufficiently common. The curriculum also has strengths, such as the breadth within physical education, the recent introduction of imaginative mathematics programmes and the growing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. However, there have been too few investigative projects and schemes of work do not consistently provide extension work for more able pupils; monitoring has been slow to pick this up.

The governing body has a more detailed knowledge of the school than is common. They are aware of areas which need to improve and, along with senior managers, have had a satisfactory impact on pupils' progress. With senior staff, they ensure that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Raise standards in science by increasing the amount of investigative work and by better tracking of pupils' progress.
- In all subjects, provide additional challenges for higher attaining pupils so that more of them reach the higher levels.
- Increase the frequency and rigour of monitoring so that teaching more consistently produces good progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Results have risen considerably since the last inspection. Despite some falling back in 2004 and 2005, pupils now reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics, while standards in science are just below average. Overall progress in the core subjects is satisfactory and in English achievement is rising. However, too few pupils gain above-average levels in English, mathematics or science. Boys' underachievement has been much reduced in English and to a lesser extent in mathematics. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are more positive, because they enjoy sessions that use stimulating ICT programmes. The school has not met its very demanding targets in the last two years, but current Year 6 work is close to the targets for this stage in the year. However, standards in problem solving and investigation are still too low, even though measures to correct this have had some success, particularly in mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They like many aspects of school life and thoroughly enjoy the practical activities they do in art. Behaviour is good because staff explain and reinforce the school's expectations effectively. Pupils improve to school life by becoming 'buddies' in the playground and the school council shares and discusses ideas effectively. Attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed well. For example, staff use assemblies effectively to explore the moral and spiritual messages in stories such as David and Goliath. Pupils are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and one says she likes physical education sessions because they 'make you fit'. Positive attitudes to life and learning, along with sound basic skills, lay satisfactory foundations for later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils often learn well, showing intense concentration and real enthusiasm for their work. This flows from well-structured teaching, where the pace is strong and where pupils are very clear about their current standards and how they can improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given good support in lessons and make satisfactory progress. However, planning and pupils' work show that teachers' use of assessment information is variable and inconsistent. Pupils know their current levels in literacy but rarely in science. Some planning reveals a close matching of task to pupils' prior attainments, but there is a stronger tendency for teachers to pitch lessons towards average attaining pupils and they are inconsistent in setting work to challenge the more able. Lessons promoting investigative work in science result in good learning, but teachers do not currently use such approaches often enough.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides the necessary opportunities for pupils to gain satisfactory basic skills in literacy and numeracy and as a result, pupils are prepared adequately for the next stage of education. There are links between subjects so that pupils learn to relate knowledge from one subject to another. The use of ICT features prominently and allows them to apply skills across subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils use their mathematical skills effectively when they create computer programmes to make complex geometrical shapes. Additional activities and clubs enrich the curriculum well by providing good opportunities for pupils to develop sporting and musical skills. However, long-term planning does not consistently develop investigative skills or provide enrichment activities to challenge gifted and talented pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are effective and pupils feel safe and well cared for. All necessary checks are made on staff and the school follows procedures for child protection very well. Pupils are encouraged to adopt safe practices. For example, many in Years 5 and 6 gain cycling proficiency awards. A pastoral support worker deals quickly and sensitively with pupils' concerns and pupils report that they are very well looked after as a result. Effective guidance procedures help pupils to learn from incidents that occasionally occur. The school takes in pupils who have not settled elsewhere and includes them well. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively and individual education plans contain specific and measurable targets. Staff track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics and provide

satisfactory guidance on how pupils can improve their performance. However, in science, such guidance has yet to impact on standards or achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory because they ensure good personal development and satisfactory academic progress. The headteacher has made the school a welcoming, secure and orderly environment and, as a result, pupils feel safe, enjoy learning and participate actively in school and community life. Standards have risen and progress improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 are now making satisfactory progress and reaching average standards in English and mathematics because of the appointment of effective coordinators who have focused on raising standards. Although monitoring has recently prompted several improvements, such as the better performance of less able boys in English, it lacks the rigour to lift overall rates of progress from satisfactory to good. Governors show a good knowledge of their school and their work has a satisfactory impact on pupils' achievement.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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 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	3
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>	2

<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.

## 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	3
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**

20 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Grange Junior School, Sparhawke, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 4PY

Thank you for your welcome during our recent visit. Special thanks go to those of you who gave up your lunch time to come and speak with inspectors.

We enjoyed our visit because there are many good things about the school:

- It is good at helping you become more confident and sociable.
- It provides lots of opportunities for you to get involved in activities such as sports, visits or the school council.
- You are given good guidance on staying safe and leading healthy life styles.
- There is good teaching in some lessons.
- The headteacher and her staff have shown they can improve standards.

For the school to improve further it needs to:

- Raise standards in science and make sure you are all good at investigation work.
- Give some of you more opportunities to do really challenging work and reach higher levels.
- Make sure that any plans to help you improve your work are checked up on by teachers and the headteacher regularly.

We look forward to hearing good things about Grange in the near future

Yours sincerely

Robert Drew

(Lead inspector)