



# Gracefield School

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	801/6009
Unique Reference Number	109343
Inspection number	302714
Inspection dates	27-28 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group 4-11	Published 22 March 2007	Reference no. 302714
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Gracefield is a mixed independent primary school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. It is situated in a detached Victorian house in an old and established residential area of East Bristol. There are 83 pupils on roll, 10 of whom receive nursery funding. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. All pupils attend full time.

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good overall education for its pupils. The curriculum is broad and teaching is good. Pupils make good progress in their learning and excellent progress in their personal development. Parents are rightly very positive about the school. Behaviour is good. Day to day running of the school and supervision of pupils are good. The school's practices and procedures regarding health, safety and welfare are inadequate because the school has not taken due regard of national guidance and requirements. The school also needs to review the availability of information for parents, carers and others. The headteacher who took up post in September 2006 is already starting to improve these areas.

## Quality of education

The school provides a good, well planned curriculum which is broadly based on the National Curriculum and includes opportunities for pupils to learn French. Teachers also make good use of other national guidance and supporting materials. A wide range of commercial materials is used. Altogether, these resources not only help to ensure that pupils are involved in appropriate age related tasks but also prepare them well for their next steps when they leave the school at 11 years old. Pupils in the Reception class follow national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities. There are clubs every evening that are well attended and enjoyed by pupils of all ages. Staff show considerable commitment in providing these activities. Guest speakers, regular visits to local places of interest, and an extended visit for Year 6 pupils suitably enrich the curriculum.

Most pupils make good progress from the time they start in the Reception class where they achieve the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1. In the most recent national tests for 11 year olds a higher than average proportion of pupils reached the nationally expected and higher levels. Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. The curriculum provides pupils with the skills to develop their future economic well-being. They are self-confident, achieve well in basic skills of numeracy, literacy and ICT and work together effectively in groups.

Pupils make good progress in reading, speaking, listening and arithmetic. They also make good progress in their understanding of different styles and purposes of writing but the accuracy and presentation of their writing is not as well developed. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to develop their own writing across the curriculum because some worksheets require only short responses. There are very limited opportunities to follow problem solving approaches in mathematics. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is well organised and pupils systematically develop good skills and understanding, achieving well at all ages. The school makes good provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Care is taken to ensure that activities for these pupils are matched to their needs.

Teaching is good. There are a number of common strengths in all lessons which help to ensure that pupils have consistent experiences in all classes. Teachers have outstanding relationships with their pupils and as a result pupils are confident in putting forward their views and ideas, knowing that they will be respected. Often teachers give clear instructions and provide pupils with precise timescales to complete tasks and this gives them an appropriate sense of urgency about completing their work. Teachers make good use of the available resources. There is a well stocked library, a wide range of materials for creative work, very good ICT facilities and suitable equipment for mathematics and science. Good use is made of specialist teaching in ICT, music and French. Pupils learn effectively in these areas.

In the best lessons pupils are fully engaged in what they are doing. When this happens their attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are keen to do well and work hard. Teachers ensure that pupils work in pairs or sometimes small groups, for example while completing a science investigation or writing short play scripts or practising phonics. This helps to develop pupils' collaborative skills. One group of pupils particularly mentioned that they liked it when their teacher put activities into a real-life context. There are some lessons where pupils are not challenged sufficiently in their independent work despite a good introductory session. This is sometimes because the teacher has not thought through exactly how these activities will stretch pupils of all abilities and how learning can be developed or reinforced in an interesting way. The youngest

pupils sometimes have a tendency to shout out too much in whole class discussions.

Teachers mark work regularly and most provide comments to inform pupils how to improve. Pupils say that these comments are helpful. Pupils also say that they find it helpful when teachers make clear the main objectives of the lesson, a common feature of lessons. All teachers assess pupils' achievement and keep records. At the moment this is not systematic across the school and therefore there is no clear way to check pupils' progress from year to year. The school is introducing a new method which will incorporate school and national testing. Pupils appreciate that the small classes enable them to receive good individual support.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. The relationships in class between pupils and staff are excellent and pupils are confident in putting forward ideas and views. Teachers use good questioning skills to gather pupils' views, respecting all contributions. This helps to develop pupils' self esteem. Pupils are very considerate to each other and work well together.

Pupils have a good sense of what is acceptable behaviour and the oldest pupils are developing very good views about rules and laws both in school and within society. In a Year 6 lesson in personal, health and social education pupils used phrases such as *.....without rules ....the world would be a dangerous place..* and *....without laws ... there would be no justice....* Pupils developed a good awareness of the difference between local rules and national laws, understanding the role of Parliament in creating laws.

Pupils in Year 1 develop self-confidence by giving individual talks to the class. Most classes have monitors for a variety of tasks and the newly formed School Council is providing a pupils' voice which has already instigated a new friendship bench in the playground, plans to celebrate World Book Day and a pupil suggestion box.

The school regularly raises money for charities and appeals, most of which have a child focus. There are close links with a local church and pupils visit a local centre for the elderly to sing and chat with residents.

The religious education programme ensures that pupils learn about all principal religions of Great Britain and also about other cultures. Recently Year 2 had a Mexican day and Year 5 have undertaken a study about India. Further opportunities to understand about French culture are provided by the French

lessons. Assemblies also make a regular contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures and to pupils' personal, social and moral development. Each year pupils lead a Remembrance service to which grandparents and the local community are invited. The school received a British Legion award for the sensitive way in which the service was conducted.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety is inadequate because the school has not implemented the practice and procedures that are required nor taken due regard of national guidance.

The day to day supervision of pupils is good and there is a strong programme to promote healthy living. Awareness of healthy eating is promoted through science lessons and pupils have healthy snacks in school. Pupils have regular exercise in school through physical education, swimming and a health and fitness club. At other clubs pupils are offered fruit and vegetables to eat. The school has taken an allotment and is part of an 'eat-a-metre' initiative to provide a family with enough fruit and vegetables from a metre square of garden.

Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils, in particular child protection, are inadequate. Staff have not had the required training although this is planned for the near future. Health and safety policies do not take full account of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance for outside visits. Risk assessments have not been completed for premises, fire risk and general school activities.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Appropriate staff checks have been made with the Criminal Records Bureau. The school does not have any formal and systematic procedure for the appointment of staff. It does not have appropriate records relating to references from prior employers and the medical fitness of staff to teach.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school is well maintained and the accommodation is used very effectively to provide an attractive learning environment. It is clean and tidy and resources are stored safely. Classrooms and hallways are enhanced by displays of pupils' work and other learning resources. Pupils benefit from a well stocked library, an ICT room and a practical work-room. Classrooms are small but adequate for the number of pupils currently on roll. Washrooms do not have sufficient hand

basins. Outside there is a small playground which, because of staggered break times, is adequate. A local park and church hall are used for sporting activities.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has a wide range of policies and documentation. The current prospectus does not have all the required information about the names and address of the proprietor, school admissions, pupils' academic performance, details of the complaints procedure, the number of staff employed and how parents or prospective parents can obtain a range of school policies including: bullying, discipline and sanctions. The school is preparing a new prospectus.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has recently written a new complaints procedure which meets all requirements. It is due to be made available for parents in the near future.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all teachers receive the appropriate child protection training in order to comply with requirements set out in the DfES publication *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- write a policy and complete risk assessments for all offsite activities to meet the requirements of the DfES guidance *Health and safety on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- extend the health and safety policy and complete all necessary risk assessments in line with DfES guidance *Health and safety responsibilities and powers* (paragraph 3(4))
- complete risk assessments in relation to fire safety to comply with Fire Precautions (workplace) Regulations 1997 (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- formalise the appointment procedure to meet the requirements of ensuring that all appropriate information is sought and recorded prior to appointment (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide more washbasins in washrooms so that there are at least two thirds the number of sanitary fittings (paragraph 5k).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- provide information about admissions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- make it clear that the following information is available for parents and prospective parents;
  - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety (paragraph 6(2)(h))
  - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
  - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
  - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- devise and implement a more robust method to check pupils' progress.



## School details

Name of school	Gracefield School		
DfES number	801/6009		
Unique reference number	109343		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1950		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 43	Girls: 40	Total: 83
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3150		
Address of school	Gracefield School 266 Overndale Road Bristol BS16 2RG		
Telephone number	01179567977		
Fax number	01179563397		
Email address	enquiries@gracefieldschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Kirchell		
Proprietor	Mrs Elizabeth Morgan		
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI		
Dates of inspection	27-28 February 2007		