

# Grafton Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101206
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	307612
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Grimshaw

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	432
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Hyde
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Grafton Road Dagenham RM8 3EX
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8270 6445
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8270 6451

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Grafton Junior School is larger than average. There are an above average number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of pupils for whom English is not their first language has increased significantly. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. These pupils have a variety of difficulties but the majority have speech, language and communication difficulties. A breakfast service operates before school and there is a lottery funded Art Base for use by the school and the wider community. The school recently gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark Award.

## 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. Pupils say that they enjoy school. One child said, 'The school is very welcoming, there is no bullying and you learn a lot from the teachers'. Pupils are polite and helpful, and behaviour is good. Pupils are cared for well and their health and safety needs are fully met. Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles is good and reflected in the wide range of sporting activities undertaken at the school. The school has established good links with the secondary school physical education department to compensate for the lack of a playing field. Positions of responsibility are available to pupils through the monitor systems and the school council, and these have recently been broadened to include all year groups. The school has satisfactory links with the wider community and pupils have opportunities to raise funds for charitable causes. Social and moral development is good but there are insufficient cultural and spiritual experiences for the pupils. Attendance has recently improved as a result of actions taken by the school and it is actively seeking the support of parents in achieving further improvements.

When pupils enter the school, they have skill levels below those expected for their age, especially in English. Pupils leave the school with standards broadly in line with, or just below, national averages. In 2007, standards in writing dipped considerably but the school has taken positive steps to provide better academic guidance through the use of improvement targets for pupils. There is clear evidence of improvement as a result, but standards in writing are still too low.

Pupils make most progress when the teachers have high expectations, use assessment information to help match the work to individuals' needs and give them time to reflect on their learning. There are examples of good quality marking that give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, but this approach is not yet consistent across classes. In the best lessons, teachers take time to talk to pupils about their progress and discuss their next steps for improving their work.

The significant majority of parents are appreciative of the school and the quality of education provided. However, the school does not always provide sufficient opportunities to involve them in supporting the learning of their children. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have education plans that are not always shared with their parents.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but links between subjects are still developing. For instance, opportunities for pupils to apply and reinforce their newly learnt writing skills in history and geography are sometimes limited. Similarly, the opportunity was missed to follow up an information technology lesson on data handling by giving pupils a chance to apply the skills they had learnt in the next mathematics lesson.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has developed very well over the last year but is not yet rigorous enough to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. In monitoring the school's work, leaders and governors do not always give clear points for development, nor follow these up promptly to ensure action has been taken to tackle them. There are examples of good practice in classroom teaching that are not currently shared sufficiently through modelling of lessons and working alongside colleagues. Governors are very supportive. The school has made sound progress since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

- Improve the teaching of writing by giving pupils increased opportunities to write in more subject areas and providing better guidance for pupils in marking.
- Make teaching more consistent by matching work more precisely to pupils' abilities and involving them more in the assessment of their own achievement.
- Sustain improvements to standards by sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance.
- Seek further ways of actively involving parents in their children's learning at school and at home.

A small proportion of the 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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enter the school with standards consistently below average. They make satisfactory progress in mathematics, science and ICT and good progress in their personal development. Standards are broadly in line by the end of Year 6. In 2007, standards in writing were much lower than in previous years but the school is addressing this issue. Consequently, the current group of pupils are on track to do better. However, standards remain below expectations. In the past, pupils with learning difficulties have made inconsistent, though satisfactory, rates of progress as a result of variations in the quality of teaching and support provided for them across the school. The school's recent involvement in the Intensifying Support Programme has ensured that pupils are now receiving help that is targeted more accurately at their learning needs.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils say they feel safe at school and they know which adults to approach if they have problems. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They say that their teachers listen to them and are very understanding. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to express their thinking and ideas through discussions in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Relationships amongst pupils in the school and between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils in Year 6 have a range of responsibilities and those who manage the Tuck Shop are particularly effective. The suppliers wrote to the school saying how very impressed they had been with the polite, confident and precise way that the pupils had placed their orders. Pupils in other year groups have fewer opportunities to demonstrate personal responsibility, although the School Council has recently been reconstituted to include pupils from Years 3 to 5.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a positive learning environment in lessons and pupils are well behaved and attentive. Teachers explain the objectives of each lesson but do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to share ideas with others or to evaluate their own

learning. The most effective lessons include good, challenging class discussions with time for pupils to reflect on their learning and to assess how well they are doing. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, when pupils thoroughly explored different methods of calculation and shared these with their classmates. Specialist assistants provide effective support to pupils who need additional help, including those whose first language is not English. However, in some lessons, they could use their time more effectively by being involved in assessing pupils' progress. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and have recently introduced learning targets for pupils to aim towards. However, teachers do not consistently use assessments of pupils' performance to tailor work to meet individuals' specific learning needs and abilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education. This is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which is helping them to grow and learn in a harmonious community. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and the creative arts, including music.

Most of the curriculum is taught in discrete subjects but there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing, mathematics and ICT skills in other subjects. In particular, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their skills through writing at length in different subjects.

A satisfactory range of extra activities such as day visits and visitors, as well as specially themed weeks, such as arts or book week, helps to enrich the work pupils undertake in lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils receive good pastoral care. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure and records are properly maintained. Assessment procedures, including teachers' marking, are satisfactory. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of assessment practice in the school; with some good practice being seen, for example, when pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their learning, and explain their thinking. Some pupils, but not all, receive valuable feedback on how well they are doing and are given advice on what they need to do to improve. However, effective assessment procedures are not consistently embedded in the school to ensure that all pupils receive good academic guidance. Arrangements for the support for pupils with learning difficulties are satisfactory, and there are well established links with external agencies. The school is in the process of reviewing the quality of its communications with parents, particularly of those with pupils with learning difficulties.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher receives good support from the deputy headteachers and the core subject leaders but the balance of wider responsibilities is uneven. Better processes for planning, monitoring and evaluating the school's work have been introduced this year and these are beginning to raise standards. The school has better information on pupils' progress that it is increasingly using to identify and tackle

underachievement. Most parents are very appreciative of the standard of education provided by the school. However, the school could provide more opportunities to involve parents in supporting their children's learning and this was reflected in a number of the questionnaires returned. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school development plan focuses on the most important priorities. For example, the school has an action plan to raise standards in writing. Governors show strong commitment and support but need to be more rigorous in monitoring the work of the school.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grafton Junior School, Dagenham, RM8 3EX

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. We found all of you to be polite and helpful, especially if we looked lost!

We were glad to hear that you enjoy school. Your teachers and other staff care about you and work very hard to help you to be successful. You told us that you feel safe and secure at school, knowing that an adult will always be there to help you if you need it. Your behaviour is good both in the classrooms and outside. The quality of your writing has improved this year but it could be better still.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked the school to do.

- Help you reach higher standards in writing by giving you more opportunities to write in all subjects and also to give you more help when your work is marked.
- Plan more lessons that have work that provides the right level of challenge for all of you.
- Involve you even more in evaluating your own work, and giving you a clear idea of how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve.
- Check more thoroughly that all lessons are good and that you are making the best possible progress.
- Work more closely with your parents so that they can give you even more help at home and in school.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and trying to do that little bit extra, especially in your writing.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and we wish you and the school well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw

Lead Inspector