

Graveney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118339
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312895
Inspection date	29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Missin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Matthews
Headteacher	Lisa Evans
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Seasalter Road Graveney Faversham ME13 9DU
Telephone number	01795 532005
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than most other primary schools. The number on roll has been increasing each year recently and now some year groups are oversubscribed. Attainment on admission is broadly average. Across the school, there is a wide variation in ability and in the gender balance between different year groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Almost all pupils have White British heritage and none is at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion is eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved Basic Skills and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. A strength is the way in which good care and welfare procedures impact on the effective promotion of pupils' personal development. Most parents are appreciative of the good care which the school provides. One typical comment was, 'This school offers a personal, warm, friendly and secure environment in which children are extremely happy.' Pupils are well looked after by all staff and care is taken to minimise risks and to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well looked after. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to school. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe and they make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. Attendance, despite the good efforts of the school, remains at just below the national average.

Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. Standards are highest in aspects of English with reading in Year 2 now above average, but remain lowest in science. Achievement across the school is satisfactory. The major factor that has limited the school's capacity to significantly raise standards or improve achievement since the last inspection has been the number of staffing changes at all levels. The school has been subject to an almost complete change of personnel, including headteacher, most teaching staff and several governors. A number of important initiatives have been recently introduced to strengthen and support the school's leadership. These include the appointment of a school business manager, the revision of the roles of the senior staff team and effective procedures for tracking the progress that pupils are making. Some of these are very recent and have not yet significantly accelerated the progress that pupils are making. The school has been part of the local authority's support programme which has brought a new coherence to the process of school improvement. However, rigorous self-evaluation processes are not fully established and the drive to raise standards, and particularly the need to focus on improving science, is not sufficiently detailed or explicit in the school improvement plan. Nonetheless, overall leadership and management are satisfactorily bringing about improvement and showing sound capacity to secure further improvement.

Teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers manage pupils well and they encourage good behaviour and positive attitudes from the pupils. Pupils enjoy their work, but the marking of pupils' work does not consistently show them how to improve. Because teachers' lesson planning does not always detail the work planned for pupils of different abilities, the progress of different groups is sometimes uneven and not all reach their full potential. The curriculum is also satisfactory, with a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and the new suite is helping the development of computer skills. There are several good enhancements, including music tuition, French and a wide range of school clubs. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Most children make sound progress in their learning, and standards by the beginning of Year 1 are broadly average. The curriculum is well planned and includes some opportunities to use the small outside activity area.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory provision, with satisfactory teaching and an interesting and varied curriculum, means that most children get a sound start in the Foundation Stage. They make adequate progress to reach average standards by the beginning of Year 1. The sound leadership and management of the Foundation Stage have particular strengths in the effective promotion of children's personal development and in the emphasis placed on teaching letters and sounds.

The school has identified the need to review the quality and attractiveness of the classroom environment. The small outside activity area is well resourced but lacks a range of different environments for children to explore. The absence of cover means that it cannot be used in wet weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate the progress that pupils are making, especially in science, through detailed improvement plans based on rigorous evaluation of strengths and weaknesses.
- Make teaching more effective by improving the quality of marking and ensuring that work matches pupils' abilities more closely.

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

When they enter the school, most children have experienced some form of pre-school education and are reaching standards that are in line with those expected for their age. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are still broadly average, although they were above the local authority's average in all areas of learning in 2007. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading but average in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. However, across the school as a whole, standards in science are lower than those in other subjects. Achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to their learning. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy coming to school. Although attendance is just below the national average, the school continues to work hard to encourage reluctant pupils to attend more regularly. Pupils appreciate being part of the school community. They take responsibility seriously as play leaders and school councillors. Bullying is very rare. 'Everyone's kind and friendly here', one said. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Work with local architects on a new school building and involvement with a nearby wind-farm project involve pupils well with the wider community and develop other future workplace skills. Pupils' social and moral development is particularly strong but the school is aware of the need to encourage further appreciation of the other cultures that make up our modern society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most teachers manage pupils well. They establish effective relationships in their classes by the way that they value and respect pupils and the contributions they make to lessons. Most planning is detailed and clear but a weakness is that the work planned for pupils of different abilities in each class is not always provided in enough detail. This means that, in some lessons,

some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers develop pupils' speaking skills well through the use of 'talk-partners' and through opportunity to take part in class discussion. Pupils cooperate well and their learning is helped through their enjoyment of their lessons. For example, in a Year 3/4 literacy lesson where pupils were using painting as a medium to 'capture ideas,' pupils were fully engrossed in their lesson and developed their skills well. However, weaknesses in planning mean that it is often not clear enough how skills will be developed fully in lessons where more than one subject is covered. Furthermore, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not consistently show them how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is appropriately focused on the provision of literacy and numeracy and the new computer suite is providing more opportunity for the development of information and communication technology skills. However, the overall provision of science across the school is less well developed because of changes in leadership and because science has not been a sufficiently strong focus in school improvement planning. The curriculum is enhanced well through additional opportunities for pupils to learn French and to take part in developing musical skills. The singing observed during the inspection was tuneful and expressive. A number of visitors and off-site visits support the curriculum satisfactorily. Many pupils take advantage of the good opportunities provided by after-school clubs. The process of developing a more creative cross-curricular approach has not yet been introduced. As a result, some opportunities to bring greater coherence to the curriculum are missed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is very committed to the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Risk assessment is in place and secure checks are made on adults who have access to pupils. Child protection procedures are clear and kept under review. The needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are quickly assessed and they receive good levels of support. Good links are established with parents and external agencies when required. Procedures to assess and track the progress which pupils are making are clear and understood by pupils. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed against key objectives in literacy, numeracy and science and they are set useful targets for improvement which they consider are helping them to do better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although recently introduced initiatives have not yet had time to have significant impact there are developing strengths in the leadership and management of the school and this is satisfactory overall. Coherence and rigour in planning and evaluation processes have not yet been fully established but the roles of senior teachers have been revised in a logical way and staff are beginning to take more responsibility for aspects of the school's work. Good use has been made of the local authority's 'Ensuing Success' programme and the appointment of a new school business manager has strengthened the school's leadership team. However, whilst these changes have the potential to improve overall provision, the drive to raise standards and accelerate progress is not explicit in the school improvement plan and monitoring and evaluation procedures

are not sufficiently rigorous. Governors support the school well and challenge it satisfactorily. However, because the school's review processes have not yet been robust enough, its view of itself has been too generous in some important areas.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Graveney Primary School, Faversham ME13 9DU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently to see how well you were doing. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work and at play.

Here are some of the best things about your school

- All the adults in the school look after you well so that you feel safe and secure.
- You enjoy school and contribute enthusiastically in lessons.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are good.
- You have good opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs.

There are a few things that we think could be even better

- All school leaders need to plan carefully to make sure that your standards rise, especially in science, and to ensure that you all make the best possible progress.
- Teachers need to make sure that work is always matched to what you can do.

Thank you again for your welcome.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Missin Lead Inspector

Annex B

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Thank you again for your welcome.

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Yours sincerely

Paul Missin
Lead Inspector