

The Grange School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122997
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314449
Inspection dates	8–9 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Pritiben Patel

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	279
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	43
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike King
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Dibben
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Avocet Way Banbury OX16 9YA
Telephone number	01295 257861
Fax number	01295 279784

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In this above average size primary school, the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of specific need is below average. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language. Two pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school holds the Eco-Schools Green Flag Status, Gold Activemark and Healthy Schools Award. Staffing is now stable, after some turbulence; the headteacher was appointed in September 2007 and the Deputy started in September 2008. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The well-being of pupils is central to the schools work. As a result, personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Comments made by parents such as, 'Children are encouraged to treat each other with respect and kindness', and 'My children are very happy at the school and have really enjoyed their time here', sum up the views of the vast majority. The school has established a range of good links with external partners. For example, their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is well developed through links with a Mumbai school. Pupils develop a very strong sense of community responsibility and contribute exceptionally well to school life and to wider communities, through participation, for example, in an Eco-committee that manages conservation issues in and around the school, as well as links with 'Banbury in Bloom'.

A parent accurately summed up the positive impact made by the new headteacher, 'I know that the headteacher is leading the school well and has a clear vision for the future development of the school'. Strong leadership has enabled her to win the respect of staff. Consequently, good teamwork is apparent. For example, staff are involved in observing each others' lessons and providing feedback. She has introduced a range of relevant initiatives to improve pupil outcomes. These have included effective pupil progress tracking systems, more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, and teachers now have a clearer understanding of pupil progress. Some initiatives however, will take time before they have a direct impact on pupils' progress. Pupils have a better understanding of the progress they make and some are able to explain the levels they are working towards. The school has recognised that some subject managers and leaders need more experience and the opportunity to lead key areas of the school, before their impact is maximised. This indicates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

In light of such changes, pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are at the expected levels for their age.

Tracking information shows variation in pupils' progress in different year groups and subject areas. This is mainly due to the variability in the quality of teaching and learning. Thus progress overall is satisfactory. Good features of lessons include a calm and purposeful learning environment, positive relationships and the active involvement of pupils in evaluating their own learning. Whilst teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities, it is not always effective and some pupils, such as those of high ability, often find the work insufficiently challenging.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care and support are strengths. Improved tracking systems, have enabled the school to provide swift support for pupils with specific needs. As a result, they make progress in line with their peers. However, academic guidance is variable, as teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils about how to improve their work.

The school offer a wide range of sports such as cross-country, rugby and football. Participation rates are high and pupils fully understand the role that exercise and a good diet plays in healthy lifestyles. Consequently, their adoption of healthy lifestyles is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the EYFS from a wide variety of settings. Children's skills, knowledge and attitudes are broadly in line with what is usually expected of four year olds. They progress well because

of good provision. The experienced EYFS leader ensures that children have a good range of teacher-led and free choice activities, which cover all areas of learning. Their personal development and well-being are good because staff are highly supportive of the children. A calm, safe and purposeful environment is established in which the children settle quickly to work. Children are encouraged to learn and develop new skills through open questions and tasks. For example, when looking at the story of the gingerbread man, they were asked to explain what would happen if he was dropped into water. Detailed notes of the progress made by individual children are kept to further enhance learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring high ability pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance by ensuring that marking consistently highlights how pupils can improve their work.
- Ensure the roles of middle managers and leaders are sufficiently developed so that they play an active part in school improvement.

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

The school correctly identified the need to address the legacy of underachievement. Through focusing on filling the gaps in pupils learning, they have been successful in improving standards and achievement. Current pupils are attaining average standards in all core subjects and this reflects satisfactory progress.

Pupils with specific learning needs make progress in line with their peers due to early intervention and effective support. The attainment of boys at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2007 was lagging behind that of girls. However, 2008 results indicate that the gender gap has closed in mathematics and writing. The attainment of boys in writing has improved, due to a focus on speaking, listening, and improving basic skills across the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes as evidenced by good levels of attendance. Relationships are strong. A pupil new to the school said, 'I made friends very quickly'. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep themselves from harm and state that they feel safe in school. Wider cultural links including the sponsorship of a child in Africa helps pupils to develop a good understanding, about their global community. Preparation for economic well-being is satisfactory as demonstrated by the development of their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Recent efforts to improve learning through monitoring and the sharing of good practice are starting to bear fruit. Positive relationships exist throughout the school and make for an enjoyable and relaxed learning environment. The best lessons are well structured and the pace is brisk, partly because of careful planning, but also due to effective use of interactive resources. The school has identified that a priority in lessons is to challenge pupils of high ability, and senior leaders monitor planning. However, this is not fully embedded in all classes. Sometimes learning objectives are not made clear to pupils and as a result, they are unsure about what it is they are learning and their progress slows. In some classes, pupils are guided to evaluate the quality of their own work and are consequently better equipped to consolidate their learning. Teaching assistants play an effective role. Recent training has broadened their expertise and their work is particularly successful in supporting pupils with specific needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a broad curriculum for pupils. Sports and French are strengths. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn French. The school successfully draws on outside links and expertise to ensure that pupils have access to a very wide range of sports. This has resulted in the Activemark Gold award. Pupils' personal development is well supported by visits, visitors and residential activities. A range of after-school activities are on offer such as cricket, netball and hockey. The popular weekly afternoon workshop has made a start in promoting a more integrated approach to learning.

The school is in the process of developing the curriculum to ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to more quickly develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Another development is highlighting in planning, opportunities for pupils of high ability to receive challenging work. Consequently, the curriculum is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened provision in information and communication technology to ensure it is now satisfactory and it is used effectively across the subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school complies with all requirements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils state that they feel safe and well cared for. Induction processes are clear and support staff provide good care for those pupils with specific needs. Improved tracking systems are enabling teachers to track pupils' progress and intervene at an early stage when pupils need help. The school has improved the knowledge and understanding pupils have about their own progress. When asked how he would improve education in the school a Year 4 boy said, 'Have targets in every subject not just mathematics and English'. The academic feedback that pupils receive about their work through teachers' marking is inconsistent. As a result, not all pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has set a clear direction for the school along with challenging targets that require all pupils to make rapid and consistent progress. It is increasingly successful because progress is being monitored rigorously and teachers held to account in regular progress meetings. Additionally, a more rigorous programme of lesson observations is beginning to raise the quality of teaching. It is early days, but the recent improvement in pupils' standards and achievement indicate the impact of these strategies.

Some, but not all subject managers, are actively involved in evaluating and assessing their areas of responsibility. They monitor teaching and learning, scrutinise lesson plans and pupils work. Senior leaders new to post, and others that require more experience, are still developing their monitoring and evaluation roles.

The impact of governors overall is satisfactory. They provide some challenge to the headteacher, for example, questioning the reduction in music provision. A more thorough attention to standards and school performance is enabling the governors, to develop their understanding of school performance data and their role in holding the school to account.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

22 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grange School, Banbury, OX16 9YA

Thank you for being so welcoming and helping us when we came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, and talking to some of you at break time. You go to a satisfactory school, which is improving.

Here is a list of some of the most important things we found about your school.

- All the adults in your school show good care for you; as a result, you enjoy school, behave well and are friendly to your teachers and to each other.
- Your teachers give you interesting work, and help you to understand the progress you make.
- You make satisfactory progress in your work and attain average standards. Children in the Reception class make good progress.
- You enjoy the extra activities that your school provides and take part in a wide range of sports; as a result, your adoption of healthy lifestyles is outstanding.
- Your school gives you many opportunities to take responsibility through the school council, library and by becoming house captain; your contribution to these roles is outstanding.
- Your school is helping you to develop a good understanding about other people outside your school.
- Your headteacher, governors and all staff are working hard to further improve things for you. They use a wide range of people from outside the school to help you.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you are all challenged by the work in lessons. Also, when they mark your books we have asked that they should make very clear how you can improve your work. The managers and leaders in your school are developing their roles further, so that they can help you even more.

Yours sincerely

Pritiben Patel

Lead Inspector