

Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131579
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	328617
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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)	307
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Albert Ede
Headteacher	Miss Lyn Corderoy
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elder Avenue Wickford Essex SS12 0LR
Telephone number	01268 734420
Fax number	01268 571745

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Grange is a larger-than-average sized primary school. Most of its pupils come from White British families. A few come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities is above that of most schools. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school admits children in the Early Years Foundation Stage from the age of four into its Reception classes. When these children enter the school their knowledge and skills range widely although, more often than in other schools, they are below what is usually found.

The school holds several educationally recognised accreditations, including Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Activemark and Basic Skills awards. It also has Fairtrade and International School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Grange is a good school, which exhibits some already outstanding features, confirming its headteacher's and governors' own evaluations. Parents support the school strongly, as shown in their overwhelmingly positive comments in questionnaires. Typical of this response was one who said, 'This school is excellent and it just gets better all the time.' It is indeed improving effectively under the guidance of its leaders and governors. They monitor and review performance conscientiously and accurately, identifying what needs to be done to ensure a strong learning environment for pupils. As a result, what is provided in the Reception classes is already outstanding, which is confirmed in the very rapid progress that children make by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the main school, an exceptionally well-constructed curriculum, based on themes, is helping pupils to understand how skills can be applied in different contexts, thereby contributing very effectively to learning. Further strengths in personal, social, health and citizenship education, linked to very strong pastoral elements of care and support are producing excellence in pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoy school, behave impeccably and are developed outstandingly well for the future.

Leaders' monitoring of lessons is good. This means that teaching and learning, already good, are continuing to improve and ensures that pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. Many start with skills and knowledge below those usually found. By the end of Year 2, standards are usually around average, which is reflected in teachers' assessments. Good progress continues from Year 3 onwards. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are frequently above average, although pupils' skills in reading are often much further advanced than in writing. Standards in many other subjects, including information and communication technology, art, singing and history are good. Pupils who struggle with learning are supported effectively and make good progress. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also thrive and achieve at least as well as all others.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils is good. Governors and senior leaders ensure that all the statutorily required elements, such as child protection and safeguarding, are in place. Unaccounted absences are followed up quickly and very effectively, so attendance is good. Pupils greatly appreciate the school's rewards and celebrations of what they achieve. The staff are models of very strong teamwork, which pupils emulate in their own safe behaviour and outstandingly good relationships. Systems to assess learning have recently been reviewed and good changes introduced. These are not always being used consistently throughout the school, although relevant leaders are monitoring the situation and working closely with staff to improve this.

Pupils know much about healthy lifestyles and taking exercise and many avail themselves of the good range of sports and other clubs provided. All of this high quality provision and performance occurs because of strong leadership, management and governance. All levels of the school's leadership are remarkably clear about what they expect and are determined to achieve the highest performance. They have achieved such outstanding performance in pupils' personal development and are now seeking to emulate it by moving good academic achievement to the next level. They monitor outcomes effectively to see whether changes provide the required effects. New approaches to writing have been introduced, reflecting the themes in the curriculum and addressing the particular interests of boys, girls and other groups, as differences in their achievements were identified. The school has a remarkable involvement in

initiatives in the local, national and global communities. These range from the good work of its own school council to taking part in national music festivals at the Royal Albert Hall to links with a school in Ghana and involvement in raising awareness of buying goods that meet fair trade benchmarks. As a result, pupils take great interest in such matters and their importance to the well-being of children in other places.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

By the time they leave the Reception year, children achieve exceptionally well. This is because nearly all of them make rapid progress and demonstrate skills approaching those expected for the age group, even though starting points are often below those usually found. The school's early years leader is an extremely effective and knowledgeable practitioner who ensures that staff have an entirely consistent approach to valuing each child's ideas and learning needs. In this highly nurturing environment, children become increasingly sociable and settled in school. The staff are highly skilled at focusing on early literacy and mathematical skills, so children make exceptionally good progress in these areas too.

Resources indoors and in a safe well-designed exterior space are excellent. This allows just the right balance for child initiated and adult led activities to blend highly successfully, so children progress constantly across all areas of learning no matter what they choose to do. Despite this excellence, no complacency is evident. Instead, everyone involved feels that they can still go further in improving learning and development. It is evident from the track record that the capacity to succeed in this is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and complete the focus on work to improve standards in writing.
- Ensure that all staff use the new systems to assess learning equally effectively and consistently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards by the time they leave in Year 6 are often above average. In 2007, the English result, although still a little above average, was not quite as good as in mathematics and science. This above average picture was sustained in the latest results. Leaders have correctly established that pupils do not perform as well in writing as in reading. A strong emphasis on language and vocabulary skills and a range of opportunities in drama and role play across the whole curriculum is beginning to improve pupils' vocabulary and related skills. Current work through the school indicates that this is beginning to bear fruit in written work.

Assessments towards the end of Year 2 also indicate good achievement. Standards fluctuate a little, but in line with pupils' starting points. In most years, assessments indicate that performance in reading, writing and mathematics is average or a little above. Support for pupils who struggle with learning is good and they make good progress. What is taught is adapted well to meet their needs and teachers and teaching assistants alike provide effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This includes their awareness of contrasting cultures, such as those they experience through the school's links with Ghana and the important contributions they make to the wider community through their very good knowledge of the principles of Fairtrade. Good contacts are also being formed currently with an inner city London school. Pupils enjoy school enormously and show this by attending enthusiastically. Behaviour, both in class and in the playground, is often exemplary. Pupils' behaviour in a whole-school assembly was, for example, attentive and remarkably responsive. Such behaviour contributes outstandingly well to their good awareness of how to lead safe and healthy lives. They take advantage of the opportunities to take physical exercise and pursue social activities through the many clubs available, especially for older pupils. Staff are determined that pupils will be helped to become even more independent, putting their knowledge of health and safety into practice outside school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their local community through for example in the work of the class and school councils and involvement in local community initiatives. Pupils' good academic standards combine well with their very strongly developed social skills to give them an excellent foundation for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and improving well. Some outstanding practice is evident. Learners of all groups and backgrounds make consistently good progress. Teachers' relationships with pupils and strategies for managing behaviour are highly effective. Pupils are eager to learn, and listen to adults extremely well. Pupils' thinking is extended effectively by good questioning at a brisk pace, although not entirely consistently at all times. Planning is thorough and focuses on the acquisition of skills. For example, when learning about World War II, pupils imagined being evacuated from London; they acted out the situation on railway platforms, and opportunities to write expressively also resulted. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support all pupils well, including those with particular learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The innovative curriculum provides considerable interest and enjoyment for pupils. This is because it is based on themes, so what is taught extends across subjects and areas of learning. A particularly strong emphasis on acquiring skills and solving problems has been developed successfully. An exciting range of approaches, appealing to boys and girls, is evident. Through each theme, much emphasis is currently being placed on writing skills, in order to raise standards in this subject. Information and communication technology is very much a part of this initiative. Visits to places of interest such as the National Gallery or Imperial War Museum further enrich each theme. Clubs are well-supported and there are good opportunities for all aspects of speaking and listening, developing pupils' confidence and vocabulary. Pupils enjoy working with other local schools, particularly in music and sport. Spanish is taught as a modern foreign language, and pupils learn effectively about healthy lifestyles and personal safety. The school

has a strong link with a school in Ghana and it promotes Fairtrade, raising awareness of other cultures effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils have specific targets, which tell them what they need to do next to move on in their learning and teachers explain to pupils how to succeed. New systems for assessing pupils' learning have been introduced. These are already producing much information about pupils' learning and progress. However, there is some inconsistency in how effectively assessment is used in planning what should be taught next. Teachers' marking shows pupils whether they have met learning intentions and what they need to do to improve. The school involves parents well in knowing what pupils are learning and how they can support them. Support from outside agencies is sought very promptly whenever needed and this advice is used highly effectively. Pastoral care is very strong. As a result, pupils know exactly what to do if anything concerns them and their feelings of well-being are at a high level. All statutory requirements related to child care, first aid, safeguarding and risk assessment are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Effective monitoring, evaluation and feedback by senior leaders have ensured that teaching and learning are good and that outstanding practice is shared, so improvement continues. Tracking of pupils' progress indicates that this teaching results in sustained progress at expected rates that sometimes accelerate to an even higher level. However this has not had full impact on pupils' achievement. Finances are managed well and are overseen effectively by the governing body, so good value for money is achieved. The school's contributions to building cohesion are outstanding. It has built strong links with parents, agencies and organisations in the area. It is also participating in national schemes and initiatives and building bridges to distant communities, such as those in inner London, or as far a field as Ghana, All leaders and managers work together and provide an exceptionally clear direction and vision for the school's future development, laid down in a clear improvement plan. They demonstrate teamwork and determination to move the school on to the next level of effectiveness. The headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher and governors, have improved the school well since its last inspection, so the capacity to achieve this aim is good.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grange Primary School, Wickford, SS12 0LR

Thank you for being so helpful, willing to talk to us and show us your work when Mrs Ranger, Mrs Walley and I inspected your school. We thought that your behaviour throughout the two days was of the highest possible standard. This helped us to enjoy being there as much as you told us that you enjoy your school all the time. We completely agree with your school councillors who told us that it is a good school. In fact, some things about it are already better than that. We think that the way your teachers plan the themes and skills that you learn is excellent and what is provided in the Reception classes is also outstanding.

Teaching is good, so you make good progress and achieve well by the time you leave in Year 6. Your results in English, mathematics and science support this view, although your writing is not always as good as the other subjects.

Here are some more important things that make your school good.

- You cooperate in work and play exceptionally well.
- Your work in subjects such as music, art and information and communication technology is good.
- You make an excellent contribution to your community. You know a lot for your age about how other communities live and support ideas such as trading fairly with farmers in other countries.
- You know a lot about how to keep fit and eat healthily.

Here are two things that we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do next.

- Show you how to improve your writing even further. You can help by making sure that you use all the exciting new words that you learn.
- Make sure that the new ways of assessing your work to help you to learn better are applied consistently.

Mrs Ranger and Mrs Walley asked me to pass on their good wishes for the future. I hope that you will continue to enjoy your days at school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull

Lead inspector