

Grassmoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112553
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337964
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2009
Reporting inspector	George Derby

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Schofield
Headteacher	Christine Moorcroft
Date of previous school inspection	3 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with pupils, governors, staff and parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation; pupils' books were examined and the 30 parent questionnaires returned to the school were examined.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- standards and progress in mathematics
- the match of work to pupils' needs and how activities interest and engage pupils
- the impact of leadership in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage on standards in the lower part of the school
- governors' and leaders' view of standards and how they provide strategic leadership in moving the school forward and raising standards
- the school's systems for safeguarding pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school. It is located near Chesterfield in a former mining community. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and none of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, National Healthy Schools Award, and The Anti-Bullying Commitment Scheme Excellence Award. Staff absence and staffing instability in the lower part of the school has been a feature in the past few years.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is, therefore, given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to its safeguarding procedures. This is because there are gaps in the school's records relating to staff recruitment and staff vetting checks that make up the single central record. The school's procedures for communicating with parents when activities are changed at short notice are inadequate.

The school is satisfactory in most respects and has some good features. The drive for improvement and determination of the senior leadership team is increasingly strong. With the headteacher's purposeful guidance and clear direction the senior leaders now have a clearer view of what needs to be done to raise standards. For the first time in two years they are a complete team; most have developed their monitoring and evaluation skills well and have a full overview of the progress that pupils make in the subject areas they lead. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively and plans are in place to extend this to the whole of the leadership team. Current planning shows that its members are now much more strategic in their approach. However, their analysis of progress tracking information does not always fully identify trends and patterns quickly enough so that planning for improvement takes place before problems occur.

The school has worked hard to successfully engage its pupils, especially its older boys. This is clearly a cohesive community, where pupils from all walks of life get on well with one another and where behaviour is good. Attendance is also good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most show great enthusiasm for their work. They know how to keep healthy and say they feel safe and secure. However, a very small number of parents have concerns over safeguarding. Activities in lessons successfully motivate most pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and has some good features. Staff match work to pupils' needs and abilities satisfactorily, although there is not a consistent approach to the way they identify what the pupils in the different groups will achieve or the way they set clear success criteria. When staff focus on teaching specific groups in their class they often do this well and most pupils learn a lot. In some lessons less attention is paid to independent learners, who need specific guidance to sustain concentration on what they are asked to do. Time is taken at the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learned and reinforce key points. Self-assessment by pupils is an increasing feature. At times, however, staff miss opportunities throughout lessons to check on pupils' learning and address any misconceptions pupils have.

Much is achieved by the learning mentor's work, through positive play, nurture

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opportunities, and by classroom staff to support pupils who face challenges with their emotional and behavioural development. Pupils are effectively helped to manage their feelings and behaviour. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and most make reasonable progress overall. The school has been less successful with those who struggle with reading over the past year but has now put suitable strategies in place to address this. Strong links with external agencies, such as psychology and learning support, as well as with parents have a positive impact on pupils' development.

Children enter the school in the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding which are below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school, reaching below average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and close to average standards overall by the end of Key Stage 2. Sterling work in improving pupils' writing skills and close attention to their experimentation and investigations in science has helped to raise standards in these subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2 these now strongly lie within national expectations and progress across Key Stage 2 has been good.

The absence of a leader for the lower part of the school and considerable recruitment and retention difficulties in part of Key Stage 1 has meant that much effort has gone in to ensuring that there has been enough staff of reasonable quality to teach the pupils. In addition, the approach to learning has sometimes been too formal for some pupils. Although development work in this key stage has been limited, an experienced leader is now in place, staffing is stable and there is a clear plan for improvement.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Good improvement has largely been made on the areas identified in the last inspection. However, the challenges faced in Key Stage 1 and the lack of focus on mathematics in Key Stage 2 have meant that standards here have not been as high and girls still outperform boys in the lower part of the school. The school knows what it needs to do and has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It also has a suitable action plan in place. Because of all of this, the school is adequately placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen procedures to safeguard pupils, particularly with regard to:
 - the completeness of the records it keeps on its staff
 - ensuring all the required information is contained in the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks
 - communication with parents when there are changes in school arrangements and when activities are cancelled at short notice.
 - The actions here should be completed by the end of the school's term in October 2009.
- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2, particularly by ensuring that full attention is given to developing pupils' abilities in using and applying mathematical

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knowledge and skills.

- Improvement in standards and progress in mathematics should be apparent over the next 12 months.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to consistently good to ensure that standards rise, especially in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - all staff make explicit what they expect each group in a class to learn and that there are clear criteria by which to judge the success of pupils' learning for each group
 - there are regular checks made during a lesson on how pupils are learning, that opportunities are taken to review this with pupils at times during a lesson, and that any misconceptions that pupils have are immediately addressed
 - pupils who are expected to learn independently are monitored from time to time and are supported in sustaining their work.
 - The actions here should take place over the next 12 months with good quality teaching seen across the school at the end of that time.
- Ensure that the senior leadership team's analysis of progress tracking information fully identifies trends and patterns so that planning for improvement takes place before problems occur.
 - The actions here should take place over the next 12 months.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they enjoy their learning. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs make good progress, while most pupils with special educational needs and others who are vulnerable make sound progress. The pupils clearly gain excitement from all that they do and the school's work to engage them more effectively in learning has paid off. Pupils apply themselves mostly well in lessons, especially when they are supported by adults. Inspectors observed pupils making good progress in the 'super learning activities'. These present very different and exciting challenges to aid pupils' strategies for thinking and learning. Time is provided for pupils to reflect on their work and especially on their life and the world around them. In most other lessons observed pupils made satisfactory progress.

The pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures is good and much improved compared with the findings of the last inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving and some good teaching was seen during the inspection, especially in Key Stage 1 and in the upper part of Key Stage 2. This leads to effective learning and good progress. Staff use the knowledge they have about children to plan their learning and to identify groups or individuals who need support. Good use is made of computers to support learning. The curriculum is being revised to make effective links between subjects and the use of partnerships within the community and with schools further afield in Pakistan is enriching pupils' experiences. A calm start to each day is aided by the daily Tai Chi sessions. Theme days/weeks and particular projects, such as the school's radio station and the Take One Picture Project linked to the National Gallery support pupils' learning and good personal development. A vast range of clubs such as for sport, cheerleading, chess, choir, bell ringing and the homework club are enjoyed by the many participants; people from the local community are also included in some of these activities.

Personal support for individuals is a strong feature, especially for those with additional needs or who are vulnerable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disability are well supported in transition and there is good liaison with coordinators of the new schools. Because the systems and procedures for safeguarding are inadequate, care guidance and support is judged inadequate.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Regular reviews of performance keep senior leaders on their toes in relation to addressing weaknesses and they are fully involved in development planning. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and challenging targets are set to raise standards. Those for Year 6 last school year were exceeded well in English and science but missed by a large margin in mathematics. The school responds well to the analyses it makes and to its tracking of all the different groups in the school; it develops adequate plans to support improvement. It is suitably strategic when concerned with pupils' personal development, the curriculum or in way it promotes community cohesion, which is a good feature of the school.

Central to the school's work is the promotion of equality; it celebrates diversity well and is an inclusive school. A strength is in the way that it supports pupils with specific needs, such as those with emotional and behavioural needs, and these are fully included in school life. As a result of its work, they make good progress in their personal development. Gaps between groups are closing, although there is still work to be done to close the gap between boys and girls in the lower part of the school.

In most respects governance is satisfactory and governors bring a good range of skills to support the school. However, their overview of safeguarding is not strong enough. While child protection procedures are well understood and systems and procedures robust, the broader aspect of safeguarding lacks rigour.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a wide of interesting activities, including those for learning outdoors. Training and external support has been effective in helping the staff move away from planning more formal activities. There is a reasonable balance of activities and a focus on areas where children struggle, such as in aspects of language, communication and numeracy. Children's learning and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but standards are below expectations when they enter Year 1. Problem solving and knowledge and understanding of the world are weaker areas and in these they make less progress. The use of computers is now a regular feature which the children enjoy. There are frequent opportunities for children to choose independent activities or to be guided by a member of staff. Occasionally, in the Nursery there is too much time spent on self-choice without sufficient support. Teaching is satisfactory, personal guidance is good and staff make regular assessments of children's learning. Assessment is accurate in Reception. Given the nature of the children's needs and their pace of learning it is somewhat overgenerous in the Nursery. An experienced Early Years leader is now in place and has a clear plan to address the weaknesses identified, especially to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' outcomes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are generally positive about the school's work and the school's own survey of their views shows these are strong. A few parents have concerns, mainly relating to safeguarding, behaviour and bullying and transition to secondary school. Safeguarding is a weakness, although the school takes seriously any bullying and pupils' behaviour is well managed. The transition to secondary school is reasonably managed and Grassmoor followed the procedures laid down by the receiving school. The inspection found that Grassmoor does take the views of parents into account and deals effectively

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with their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grassmoor Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	60	10	33	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	57	10	33	0	0	3	10
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	33	19	63	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	37	16	53	2	7	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	12	40	17	57	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	33	18	60	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	40	18	60	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	33	19	63	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	33	18	60	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	20	20	67	2	7	2	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	13	23	77	1	3	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	12	40	16	53	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	37	17	57	1	3	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grassmoor School, Grassmoor, S42 5EP

Thank you for making us most welcome during our two days with you; we were most impressed with your politeness and helpfulness. You go to a school which has worked hard to make learning interesting for you and which provides a good range of activities outside lessons. You are clearly enthusiastic learners and told us you like lessons and the after-school clubs. Although we think the school has many satisfactory and has some good parts, we had to judge it inadequate. This is because governors need to improve their policies and systems for safeguarding everyone so that these meet important government requirements.

Here are some of the good things we liked about your school:

- your behaviour is good and you know how to keep healthy
- you love coming to school and attendance is good
- you make a strong contribution to the community locally and to the world community in Pakistan
- in Key Stage 2 in English and science you do well and your writing skills have improved enormously across the school in the past few years
- the support given to those of you who struggle with how you feel or with your behaviour is good.

You mostly make satisfactory progress through the school but we, and your headteacher, want you to make good progress and reach above average standards.

In order to do this, we have asked the school to particularly improve:

- the policies and systems that governors have for safeguarding
- your progress and your ability to solve problems in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- teaching so that what you are to learn is much more precisely identified for the different groups of learners in each class
- how regularly your learning is checked; this is to help accelerate your progress, especially in the lower part of the school
- how the headteacher and senior staff use the information they have about you to plan what you need to do to improve well ahead of time.

Best wishes for the future

George Derby
Lead Inspector

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