

Grange Park School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119051 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 339331 |
| Inspection dates | 5–6 May 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Kell |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 71 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 24 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Matthew Balfour |
| Headteacher | Mark Robson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 June 2007 |
| School address | Birling Road West Malling ME19 5QA |
| Telephone number | 01732 842144 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons, taught by nine members of staff, were observed. Meetings were held with staff on both sites. Further discussions were had with the chair of governors, the chair of the teaching and learning sub-committee, and students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, such as development planning and assessment and attendance data. The 29 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were questionnaires completed by staff and students.

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

- how well the school meets the needs of the very small number of girls
- the length of the planned taught week and the range of accredited courses
- the effectiveness of assessment systems in measuring students' progress and evaluating their achievements
- the quality of learning targets.

Information about the school

Grange Park School is on two sites. Post-16 students have accommodation in a local technology college. Secondary-aged students are approximately three miles away in an extremely isolated location. They are due to be relocated in September of this year into a new purpose-built school that is adjacent to a mainstream secondary school.

All students have a statement of special educational needs for autism. A very small minority of students are girls. The vast majority of students have a White British background. There are no students in public care and only a few are entitled to free school meals.

The school received recognition for its work with children with autism through the National Autistic Society in 2009, and it has also acquired recently a Sportsmark, Healthy School status and a silver Eco School Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Grange Park School is satisfactory, as is its provision for post-16 students. Good safeguarding arrangements are in place and good quality pastoral care and support is provided. Consequently, students make good progress in many areas of personal development. They behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. Many know about the importance of making □right□ choices and the implications of not doing so. Students demonstrate good understanding of how to stay safe and to remain healthy. They grow in confidence and become more competent communicators and more socially aware young people. Students make satisfactory progress in being ready for leaving school; attendance is broadly average.

Teaching is good. Students learn at a good rate in lessons. Despite this, their progress and achievements are no better than satisfactory. Primarily, this is because the length of the planned taught week is significantly less than the recommended time for this age group. Therefore, students do not have as long as they ought to have to consolidate their learning and acquire new skills in planned circumstances. Other features of the curriculum are also responsible for this reduced rate of progress. These include weaknesses in curriculum design in Years 10 and 11 and the limited range of accreditations that is available. Students□ attainment is low because of the nature and the impact of their special educational needs.

School leadership is satisfactory. Some features are good, such as leaders□ commitment to equality of opportunity for all students. For instance, outcomes for the very few girls on roll are the same as those for boys. Close liaison with partner organisations, such as schools, and good links with home are important contributory factors to supporting students□ learning. The school□s contribution to promoting community cohesion is satisfactory; its isolated location means that there is no immediate neighbourhood or local community.

Leaders have done a satisfactory job in raising expectations and performance. However, they did not recognise or respond quickly enough to unreliable assessment systems. They have now begun to tackle the problem but weaknesses remain. Leaders have no yardsticks against which to measure students□ progress, and accurate learning targets are not routinely set and shared with students. These shortcomings were not identified sooner because there is no cycle of rigorous, structured self-audit. As a result, other relative weaknesses, for example associated with curriculum design, were not unearthed and so they remain unresolved. These circumstances and satisfactory governance indicate that the school□s capacity for further development is no better than satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate at which students learn and make progress by:
 - increasing the amount of planned, taught time
 - extending the range of accredited courses and subjects
 - setting students realistic, challenging targets that are shared with them
 - constructing a curriculum for Years 10 and 11 that is better balanced and more appropriate to students' needs.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - establishing a rigorous cycle of self-evaluation that enables the school to identify the most important priorities on which it needs to focus
 - embedding procedures to accurately assess, moderate, record and track students' achievements
 - analysing assessment data critically against established criteria in order to better determine individuals' and groups' progress and achievements
 - promoting community cohesion in the school's new locality and within the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students mature and grow as young people as they move through the school. They become more independent as learners and acquire important practical self-help skills. Students develop good understanding of sequences and how to cope with change. They make good gains in appreciating that their actions have consequences for themselves and/or others. Students contribute willingly to the school community through being on the school council or as a 'buddy'. Location limits how much they can contribute to a local community, although they do have some input, such as through their recycling work. A good programme of visits and visitors into school expose students to situations with which they are unfamiliar. Students report and reflect on these experiences well, making good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes an appreciation of different faiths and cultures through experiences such as talking with a Buddhist monk.

Students are generally inquisitive and receptive learners. They learn at a good pace in lessons but this does not result in a good rate of progress over time. Achievements are satisfactory. Greater progress is prevented by the weaknesses in curriculum and the use of assessment data. Although students acquire academic skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate in lessons, they do not build effectively on this platform. The short week and a lack of balance and progression in the curriculum prevent accelerated learning. The limited range of accredited subjects and courses does not

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sufficiently stretch the few more capable students. Teachers now use assessment information when planning lessons, but there is no valid data to show the length of journey that students have travelled in their learning over time and this negatively affects their progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 4 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teachers use a good range of communication systems, resources and learning activities to include all students. They seize opportunities to promote students' speaking and listening skills. Students are managed without fuss and routines are well established. Therefore, while lesson time is used efficiently, not enough of it is available over the week. Relationships are good and teaching assistants provide good support to individuals and small groups.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets statutory requirements. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has some good elements of work-related learning, such as work experience and mini enterprises, but there are no college links for vocational programmes although the students wished there were. This is indicative of the major shortcoming in the Key Stage

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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4 curriculum; there is no rationale for its design or explanation of its contents. For instance, the time allocated to core subjects like English and mathematics does not increase in Key Stage 4 and yet time is given to subjects such as art and humanities even though students' work is not accredited in these subjects. A few students with particular talents, such as in art, have their curriculum needs met well through inclusion in mainstream schools. Others, who require a more practical approach to learning, are scheduled to spend part of their week following elements of a more practical life-skills programme taught in school. Personal and academic outcomes for these students are the same as those for the rest of the school.

Good work with other agencies provides a coordinated approach to guiding and supporting students' personal development. Staff know their students very well and they take good care of them. They have high expectations and encourage independence, such as getting students to choose which of their three personal targets they wish to focus upon each day. Staff are beginning to improve the quality of academic support and guidance as they become more skilled at assessing students' achievements. This is now evident in lesson planning but it is not yet apparent in the setting of long-term targets that are shared with the students and so they do not have goals at which to aim.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders recognised the need to improve the quality of teaching and they achieved this. The recent successful drive to recruit specialist subject teachers is now having a positive impact in the classroom. Despite developments such as this, relatively weaker aspects of the school's work have gone unnoticed and this confirms the judgement that the school's capacity for sustaining improvement falls short of being good. This is because there are no formal, robust, systematic, planned procedures for self-evaluation. As there is no structured approach to identifying and prioritising the school's relative weaknesses, ineffective characteristics of the curriculum did not come to light. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and ensure that students are safe. The school is effective in providing students with equality of opportunity and overcoming discrimination.

Procedures for collecting, collating and analysing data generally are not efficient. Data analysis is a blunt instrument. It is sufficient to enable leaders to identify individuals who

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are clearly having difficulties and to respond to this. This might be to explore the reasons why with individual teachers or it could be the trigger to give students access to the life-skills programme. However, the procedures are not refined enough to permit informed judgements to be made about students' rate of progress over time. Nor do they incorporate any established criteria that allow students' performances to be compared with the achievements of similar students in other circumstances. Leaders are not yet in a position to measure students' progress accurately or evaluate their achievements confidently.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| 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 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

Post-16 provision is ideally situated in well-appointed accommodation in the heart of a mainstream school. This arrangement provides good opportunities for students to interact with their mainstream peers not only at break times, when some do this, but also more formally. For example, Grange Park is represented on the mainstream school's student council. This contributes to the good progress that students make in their personal development. Teaching is good. Activities are suitably challenging and students' communication skills are promoted well. However, the shortcomings on the Grange Park main site are here too. There is no clear rationale for the curriculum, taught time is relatively short, and assessment procedures are not embedded.

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

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Views are overwhelmingly positive. A number of parents added positive comments to the questionnaires, such as: We have a happy well-adjusted caring son who is enjoying his education and Our child has grown in confidence since going to Grange Park . Inspectors agree with parents comments on their children s personal development, but not with all of their views about their children s learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grange Park 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 71 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 19 | 66 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 22 | 76 | 7 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 18 | 62 | 11 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 11 | 38 | 18 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 19 | 66 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 14 | 48 | 15 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 12 | 41 | 16 | 55 | 1 | 3 | 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) | 16 | 55 | 13 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 19 | 66 | 9 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 19 | 60 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 13 | 45 | 15 | 52 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 22 | 76 | 7 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 20 | 69 | 9 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



7 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Grange Park School, West Malling, ME19 5QA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. There is a special thank you to those students who gave up their time to talk with us. We spent two very enjoyable days with you. Grange Park is a satisfactory school.

You make good progress in the speed at which you grow up as young people. We were impressed by your good behaviour and how polite and well mannered you are. You obviously enjoy being at school. You know a great deal about how to stay safe and remain healthy. The school does a reasonable job in helping you to get ready for leaving school, although you told us that you would like to go to see the college in Years 10 and 11. Most of you attend school as often as you can, although some of you could go more often.

You make satisfactory progress in your work. You learn a lot in lessons but there are not enough lessons in the week. The staff take good care of you and you told us that you feel safe in school. The people who run your school are doing a satisfactory job. They want to make Grange Park School better and so we have asked them to:

- make sure that every one of you is making as much progress as you possibly can
- put in place systems that will help them to know exactly what is going on in your school.

Thank you once again for welcoming us into your school. I wish all of you the very best of luck in the future especially if you are leaving school in the next few weeks. I hope that you enjoy your new school when you move there in September.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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