

Grove Park Primary School

Hilton Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1PT

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and by the time they leave the school, the standards they reach are above the expected level; they are particularly high in reading.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the very good focused teaching activities provided by teaching assistants.
- The majority of teaching is good because teachers have high expectations, the pace in the lessons is brisk and the activities planned by teachers fully engage the pupils in their learning.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and are very pleased that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Pupils enjoy school; they feel safe, behave well, and are confident that any bullying is dealt with.
- Senior leaders, including governors, are effective in improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school. They monitor teaching and pupils' work thoroughly and then support teachers to help pupils to do their very best. Areas where improvements need to be made are clearly identified and acted upon.
- Governors are very experienced and knowledgeable. They ask challenging questions to ensure that actions agreed are having a positive impact on pupil progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 does not always provide a consistently high level of challenge for all pupils.
- On occasion, there are missed opportunities in teachers' questioning and marking to further extend learning.
- Not all subject leaders are effectively leading their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 35 full and part lessons, of which two were joint observations, and learning walks with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A joint book scrutiny was carried out with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and an independent educational consultant.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and met with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents from 53 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and met some parents informally at the start and end of the school day.
- The views of 66 staff who returned questionnaires were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s own self-evaluation; the school’s improvement plan; the school’s data for tracking pupil progress; work in pupils’ books; monitoring files; behaviour and attendance records; minutes of the governing body meetings and the documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pervina Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maura Docherty

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Capron

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic heritages other than White British is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is greater than those found nationally, in all three categories.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In this school, there are no children from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a children centre on site which is separately managed; however, the centre manager is a member of the governing body.
- There is a nursery on site which is managed by an independent company which also provides a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school works in partnership with other local schools, and this is called the 'Gateway Alliance'. The partnership has been set up to support school improvement work across the schools.
- Grove Park Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 June 2012. When its predecessor school, Grove Park Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by making sure that:
 - all pupils in Years 3 and 4 are consistently provided with challenging activities that enable them to make more rapid progress.
 - marking feedback consistently provides pupils with practical advice on how to improve, and that pupils always follow the advice given.
 - open questions are carefully chosen to extend pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking.
- Improve subject leadership by ensuring that all subject leaders:
 - monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' work regularly.
 - monitor the standards reached and progress made by pupils in their subjects more rigorously.
 - receive training to develop their leadership skills so that they are able to support teachers to raise achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School data and work in pupils' books indicate that by the time pupils leave the school, their attainment is above the national average in English and mathematics. Pupils perform particularly well in reading and many are exceeding the expected level. This is due to good teaching in lessons and the very good extra support pupils get through one-to-one tuition and small-group work which are provided by experienced teachers and skilled teaching assistants.
- Current progress overall is good in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. However, it is less rapid in Year 3 and Year 4 because not all of the teaching enables pupils to think for themselves and expectations are not always high enough.
- Pupils' attainment when they join the school in the Reception Year is broadly below that expected for their age, particularly in literacy and mathematics. During their time in the Reception Year, they make good progress due to the stimulating activities which fully engage them in their learning. They leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment which is broadly that expected for their age.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are carefully monitored and well supported by knowledgeable adults, and consequently they make good progress overall, with some making exceptional progress in writing.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress. The pupil premium money has been effectively used to increase resources and staffing to provide focused support to individual pupils and groups of pupils. Overall there is still a gap of eight months in attainment in both English and mathematics but they are rapidly catching up.
- Pupils from ethnic heritages other than White British, and those that speak English as an additional language, are achieving as well as their peers.
- Boys are performing as well as the girls where the teaching engages them and they are motivated to learn.
- The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check for sounds that letters make (phonics) is higher than the 2012 national figure. Pupils that were below the expected level have had focused interventions and most have now reached the expected level. Phonics is taught very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. When hearing pupils read, inspectors found that pupils were able to apply very well their knowledge of the sounds that letters make and were able to confidently talk about the text.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the majority of the teaching, planning is well structured and work is carefully set for the ability of the pupils. This enables all groups of pupils to access the tasks and so pupils make good progress.
- Teachers listen and observe pupils carefully during the lessons; they monitor their work and give good verbal guidance.
- In lessons where pupils are making rapid progress, teachers have appropriately high expectations and good subject knowledge and they know when to intervene and move pupils on. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were challenged to think whether it was better to use a colon or a semicolon.
- Relationships are good and all groups of learners cooperate well with each other. Pupils generally participate well in whole-class sessions but some lose interest when the pace slows.
- In Years 3 and 4, some pupils do not make rapid progress because there is too much teacher talk and the work is not challenging enough. Teachers monitor the work but do not alter the tasks to enable pupils to make more progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, imaginative and creative activities engage the pupils and

increase their enjoyment of learning. For example, pupils were very excited about 'visiting Australia' and explained that they had already packed their cases ready for the visit later on in the week.

- Support staff are clear about their roles and provide excellent support. This is because they are well prepared and deployed by the teachers. They are particularly effective in providing focused teaching to school action and school action plus pupils as well as those eligible for the pupil premium. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teaching assistant was working with two pupils and successfully enabling them to complete addition sums by good questioning and the use of practical apparatus.
- Teachers regularly mark the pupils' work, praise what has been achieved and point out how pupils can improve their work. However, on occasion the points made do not enable pupils to practise the next step in their learning and teachers do not check that pupils consistently apply the guidance given.
- Although teachers use question-and-answer sessions to assess pupils' understanding, they sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' understanding and thinking through questioning.
- All parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their children were taught well. Work in books and observations of lessons confirmed this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning. They like coming to school and enjoy the work. They say 'it is a really good school and you get a great education.' Attendance is above average.
- Staff manage the behaviour of the pupils well and very little inappropriate behaviour interrupts lessons.
- Pupils generally have good manners and are respectful. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other and there is an absence of any discrimination. There have been no exclusions.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and are confident staff will deal with any problems. Most of the parents and carers that responded to the Parent View questionnaire and those that were spoken to in the playground agreed with this view and said that their children feel safe.
- Pupils know how to keep safe. For example, they understand about the risk of using some internet sites and they are aware of how to keep safe near railway crossings.
- All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. For example, some of the pupil premium money is used to fund a Family Pupil Support Worker who provides valuable support to vulnerable families so that the pupils can fully access learning.
- There is a very positive ethos in the school and pupils enjoy responsibilities such as being 'Play Pals' who help other pupils have an enjoyable playtime.
- Pupils who are chosen to be 'Lead Learners' for the week enjoy reporting to senior leaders about their learning during the week. They say they 'have to see if the teachers are any good'. For example, they report on who they have read to, what they have learnt in lessons, and what they have improved.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because there are occasional lapses in pupils' good behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have high expectations of achievement and teaching. They communicate this well to all staff and any inadequacies are rigorously monitored.
- Teachers' performance management targets are clearly linked to pupil achievement. Senior leaders carry out monitoring of lessons, pupils' work, focused interventions and planning.

- Pupil progress is robustly tracked and regular pupil progress meetings are held with teachers to evaluate the progress made by all groups of pupils. Pupils who are not making rapid progress are discussed in detail and appropriate interventions are then put in place.
 - The partnership with the local schools, called the 'Gateway Alliance', has helped to provide very good training for teachers and teaching assistants. This has helped to improve teaching and has developed teaching assistants' knowledge and skills. For example, two teachers have been involved in a programme where they train as key teachers who then are able to coach other teachers to be good or better. Skilled teaching assistants have also been used to coach other teaching assistants in the partnership.
 - The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used to produce a focused improvement plan which is also linked to the ambitious 'Gateway Alliance Action Plan'. Subject leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects; they provide resources, monitor planning and pupils' work. However, they do not yet have a sufficiently strong impact on the quality of teaching in their subjects and not all of them are fully aware of the standards and progress made by pupils. Senior leaders rightly acknowledge the need for additional training to support their development.
 - Staff are very positive about the school and are supportive of the leadership. The school has capacity to improve further.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a 'Link Learning' initiative which aims to link several subjects, but this is not yet fully embedded. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as gardening, music, art, theatre and cricket.
 - Parents and carers are kept well informed about the school and they feel it is well led and managed.
 - Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully in place.
 - The school has engaged independent consultant support and this has been useful in moderating judgements. The local authority have provided light touch support for this good school, through the school's connection with the 'Gateway Alliance'
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - This is a strength. The governors are very experienced and knowledgeable. They have had training on data and are confident in analysing it. They are fully aware of how the school's achievement compares with achievement nationally. They have expertise in finance and they ask pertinent questions about the use of pupil premium money and the impact it has on pupils' progress. For example, they evaluate how much value is added to learning through the employment of extra staff. They know how performance management links to salary progression and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school, including where there is underperformance and how this is being addressed.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138151
Inspection number	406772

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 of pupils on the school roll	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Carey
Headteacher	C�eranne Litton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01795 477417
Fax number	01795 436063
Email address	office@grove-park.kent.sch.uk

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