

Inspection of Grove Park Primary School

Hilton Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PT

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

New leaders recognise that, in the past, pupils have not had the education or the wider opportunities they deserve, and have worked tirelessly to introduce a more ambitious curriculum. Currently, though, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils feel valued through leaders listening to their views. The recently elected pupil council has voted for new values of 'resilience, resourcefulness, reflection and responsibility'. Pupils are getting used to a fresh, positive approach to behaviour management, which they say is fairer because leaders help them with their emotions. As one pupil put it: 'They are making the school a very good school. They're good at what they do. They sort out problems properly and if we're bad, they explain what we've done wrong in a nice way and help us put it right.' However, the new approach is not yet applied consistently, so instances of poor behaviour sometimes interrupt pupils' learning.

Pupils benefit from 'Bikeability' training, and going on trips to the Kent Life museum and to Canterbury Cathedral. They enjoy social times, playing kindly together and sharing the new games equipment, music and bubbles during lunchtime play.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

New leaders are reinvigorating the school with a strong vision and high expectations after a turbulent time. They are well supported by trust leaders, who bring a wealth of experience and much-needed stability.

Leaders rightly started with the teaching of reading. They have introduced a new phonics curriculum. Children in Reception Year get off to a good start with phonics, practising reading frequently with books that match the sounds they are learning. Any pupils at risk of falling behind are supported by staff with the expertise to help them become confident readers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for whom the phonics curriculum is new, have additional support, which is helping them catch up rapidly.

Trust leaders prioritise staff training where it will make the most difference for pupils. For example, they have supported staff in developing their subject knowledge to teach the recently introduced phonics and mathematics curriculums, from Reception to Year 6. These curriculums build logically and the exact skills and knowledge that must be learned are identified. This supports teachers to present subject matter well and plan activities that help pupils remember what they have learned, so that their understanding develops securely over time. Teachers check for misconceptions or whether pupils have gaps in their understanding. However, this is not consistent practice across the curriculum, which means that, overall, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The curriculum is not yet fully developed. Trust leaders are mentoring new subject leaders and supporting them to adapt the trust curriculum to reflect the school's

identity. Pupils are now learning a curriculum which meets the expectations of the national curriculum. In subjects such as science, history and geography, leaders are involving teachers to finalise the precise content that pupils must learn. Other subjects, such as religious education and music, are more fully developed and set out in a logical order, helping teachers to support pupils to build new ideas on past learning.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They acknowledge that these pupils were not identified quickly enough in the past, nor were they, or their families, given the support they needed to thrive. Leaders are building an inclusive culture, improving provision for pupils with SEND, who now have detailed individualised plans designed to meet their needs. Pupils with SEND are fully included in every aspect of school life and learn the same curriculum as their peers.

The curriculum does not yet extend far beyond the academic. Leaders have an ambitious vision for pupils' personal, social and health education, having recently introduced a new curriculum. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They know they must treat others as they would like to be treated themselves and understand how to resist peer pressure. However, it is too early to see further impact of leaders' plans.

Trustees work effectively with leaders, embodying the shared value of 'stronger together'. They support leaders to introduce change at a manageable pace, listening to staff so that workload is reasonable and that the school builds on firm foundations of trust, respect and empowerment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trust leaders have introduced more robust systems for recording and managing concerns. Leaders know pupils well and keep a vigilant eye on anyone about whom they are concerned. Staff are trained to recognise concerns and report them accurately and confidently, no matter how small. Leaders take decisive action if they are worried about pupils or their families, carrying out home visits and reporting concerns to social services or the police where necessary.

Pupils learn how to stay safe on the internet by keeping personal information private and being careful about whom they make friends with online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parts of the curriculum are still being developed. Pupils are not learning as well as they should. Leaders should continue working together to identify fully the key skills and knowledge which they want pupils to learn in each subject, from Reception to Year 6, and use this to inform assessment.
- Many subject leaders are new to their role. They are not yet influencing practice sufficiently. Senior leaders should continue to support new subject leaders to monitor and review the curriculum and help teachers to build their expertise.
- The new positive behaviour policy is not yet fully understood by staff or pupils. Pupils are not getting consistent messages about how to change their behaviour. Leaders should continue to develop staff so that pupils benefit from a more positive and inclusive culture of behaviour management.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138151
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256362
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Peterson
Headteacher	Lauren Flain
Website	gp.groveparkacademies.org
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- In September 2022, the school transitioned from Grove Park Academies Trust to Bourne Alliance Multi-Academy Trust.
- A new head of school started in April 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the trust’s chief executive officer and the head of school.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted’s online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding through scrutinising safeguarding records and discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school’s documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of trust board meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ behaviour.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Leah Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector

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