

Grove Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123149
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359373
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Kerr
Headteacher	Wendy Grace
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
School address	North Drive Wantage OX12 7PW
Telephone number	01235 769867
Fax number	01235769867
Email address	office.3228@grove.oxon.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Inspection number	359373

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons or parts of lessons and observed eight teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and some Year 6 pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work in literacy and mathematics, the school's curricular planning, assessment and tracking information for each year group and its procedures for ensuring pupils' safety. Inspectors also considered 35 questionnaires that were received from parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of strategies to improve attainment of pupils in mathematics.
- The success of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in ensuring that more able pupils are challenged appropriately.
- The quality of day-to-day assessment and marking and how well information is used to ensure planning is matched to the needs of all pupils.
- How effectively governors monitor and challenge the school's performance.

Information about the school

Grove Church of England School is smaller than the average sized primary school and serves an area to the north of Wantage. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most needs are related to moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception class. The school has a number of awards including Healthy Schools and Silver Eco-award and holds the Activemark. There is a pre-school on site but this is not managed by the governing body and was therefore not part of this inspection.

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

Grove Church of England School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, and attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. Recent changes in staffing and in the deployment of senior staff mean that this academic year, pupils are making better progress than they have done previously. This particularly applies to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make good progress with their learning.

Although attainment in mathematics and English is satisfactory and rising, there are still some weaknesses in both subjects, particularly in writing. The school has worked hard with pupils to improve the presentation of their work, with some success. However, pupils' spelling is not good because they are not taught this systematically enough and they have too little access to resources such as dictionaries and word banks to help them when carrying out written tasks. Pupils' use of correct punctuation is sporadic, and reminders by teachers to use this correctly are not followed up rigorously enough. Weaknesses in mathematics skills, such as subtraction, have been identified and action taken to tackle these. Nevertheless, pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to use the skills they are taught in solving problems or carrying out investigations. The school is remedying this to an extent; for example, it is holding a mathematics fair which will revolve around problem-solving activities, but this is a good one-off activity rather than a regular occurrence.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although all the teaching observed had some positive features, it was not consistently good enough to ensure good progress in lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well, which ensures that most pupils remain focused on their learning. Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, nor do they always provide them with enough resources to enable them to achieve highly. Some teachers spend too long on their initial input to lessons, leaving pupils too little time to complete their tasks.

The curriculum is exciting and lively and motivates the pupils to learn. It is well balanced and there is a wide range of visits, visitors and enrichment activities to enhance pupils' learning. The school looks after its pupils well and provides good care, guidance and support. Pupils are interested in their learning and speak enthusiastically about it. They are generally well behaved both in class and in the playground. They show an excellent knowledge of what living a healthy lifestyle entails and make an excellent contribution to, and show responsibility towards, the school, environment and wider community, fully deserving their eco-award. They take on a wide range of responsibilities and organise and run events from start to finish in order to raise money to support the child they sponsor in Bolivia.

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 governing body is strongly supportive of the school. It is beginning to challenge the school's performance but admits that currently governors have too little input into the monitoring and evaluation process. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. The staff showed in their responses to the questionnaires that they share this vision and support the drive for improvement. This, combined with improving academic outcomes for pupils, demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply the basic skills in problem solving and investigations.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - improving the basic skills of spelling and punctuation
 - ensuring that pupils have access to resources such as dictionaries and word banks on a regular basis.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to be more consistently good by:
 - increasing the pace of lessons by ensuring short-burst activities are time- limited and initial input leaves pupils enough time to complete their tasks
 - having consistently high expectations of what the pupils can achieve
 - effectively deploying teaching assistants so that all pupils are supported well.
- Develop the skills of the governing body to enable them to have a greater role in evaluating and contributing to the work of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils say they enjoy their learning and this is illustrated by their enthusiastic responses in lessons. They cooperate well together and this was particularly evident in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6. They were devising problems or investigations for other pupils to solve at the forthcoming school mathematics fair. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have an excellent understanding of what physical and emotional well-being entails, fully justifying their Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The school's values programme promotes pupils' personal development very well. They are thoughtful and reflective, clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and celebrate and value the diversity of culture in their school and in the United Kingdom.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress from their starting points in language, literacy and mathematical skills. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work together and are interested in the tasks given to them. Although they sometimes make good progress in lessons, it is more often satisfactory. This is because although tasks set are interesting, it is obvious that pupils do not always have access to the resources they need to make good progress. This was illustrated in a literacy lesson for older pupils. They were trying to find more exciting and evocative adverbs and adjectives

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

to use in their extended writing. However, many pupils were unable to find what they wanted and it was very evident that they rarely had the use of a thesaurus to help them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because they receive good one-to-one support which is moving them forward quickly in key areas such as reading to enable them to make better progress in class. More able pupils also benefit from small group sessions, particularly in mathematics, that extend and challenge their thinking. Pupils are developing good entrepreneurial skills and are competent at using information and communication technology (ICT). Taken with their good personal development and improving academic performance, the pupils are well prepared for future life.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

In all lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory and some was better. However, there is not enough consistently good teaching which means pupils do not make as much progress as they could. In most classes, tasks are generally interesting and pupils have appropriate opportunities to share ideas with each other or in small groups. This sustains their interest. The pace of learning sometimes slows when pupils have too long to discuss their ideas or when teachers talk for too long. Teaching assistants work well with individuals or small groups, but do not always give enough support to groups of pupils when they are in class. Since the previous inspection,

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

assessment systems have been much improved and more information is available as to how much progress pupils are making. Teachers use this information to plan tasks for pupils of differing abilities but do not always make the tasks challenging enough. Marking has improved considerably since the start of the year and enables pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

A lively whole-school curriculum interests and enthuses the pupils. It has been recently reviewed and reflects pupils' own experiences and interests more. Because it is relatively new, the full impact of this has yet to be seen in pupils' achievement. Care has been taken to establish good links across a range of subjects. The current theme of 'Fairy Tales' has generated work in mathematics, science, design and technology, and ICT as well as in English. A very wide range of activities such as music lessons and sports coaching enhance the curriculum effectively. A variety of visits, visitors and themed days and weeks further enhance pupils' learning. 'Funarumi', the breakfast and after school clubs, are welcoming and provide pupils with varied and enjoyable activities inside and out during term time.

The school has a wide range of links with outside agencies. These ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups whose circumstances have made them vulnerable receive good or better support. This enables them to make good progress in their personal and, often, their academic development. Pupils joining the school are welcomed and transition into and out of the school is effectively managed to make it as smooth as possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is well focused on improving achievement and accelerating pupils' progress. Several initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and thus on attainment. For example, teachers have the opportunity to visit outstanding schools in order to see and understand best practice. In addition, senior leaders have been more actively involved in monitoring and observing lessons, and in examining planning and pupils' work. The decision to take the special educational needs coordinator out of class has been a positive one. It enables a greater emphasis on the provision not only for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but also those who are more able. Leaders are well aware of where weaknesses remain and strategies for addressing these have been planned.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and has a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are robust.

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

Staff are trained well in child protection procedures and all adults are fully checked and vetted before they work in school. Leaders endeavour to ensure that pupils, whatever their ethnic or cultural background, are valued and free from discrimination. A comprehensive audit has been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's community cohesion policy and an action plan is fully in place. The pupils have a good understanding of the range of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain. The school provides many opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning through their Family Learning programme and to attend events as diverse as Family Aerobics and use of the Learning Platform in ICT.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Induction arrangements to support children joining the school are good and children settle quickly and happily. School records show that children join Year1 having made good progress through their Reception Year. The children work well as individuals and together in pairs or as a small group. They take turns and happily share equipment and resources. There is a very good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those that the children choose for themselves. Many are related to the whole-school theme of 'Fairy Tales'. Children have fun making a playdough Gingerbread Man. They recount the story amongst themselves as they are working, developing their speaking and listening skills. They count the buttons they put down his front and eagerly experiment with different ways of creating his face. The outside area is excellent and children have free access to this during most of the day to support their learning in the classroom. Children receive good support and tasks are well matched to their needs. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The job-share in this class is managed well and teachers work closely together to ensure continuity and consistency of provision. There is careful monitoring and tracking of children's achievements, and assessments are

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

recorded clearly. However, these do not always identify the next steps in children's learning clearly enough for parents and carers to be able to understand.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school. They all say their children enjoy school and the vast majority say the school keeps their children safe. Several positive comments related to the care provided for their children, particularly in providing additional support for pupils who have difficulties with their learning. The inspection findings support these views and found that the care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. A few parents and carers feel they do not have enough opportunity to find out how well their children are doing. The inspection found that the school operates an open door policy as well as providing appropriate opportunities for parents' and carers' consultations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grove Church of England 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	57	15	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	54	15	43	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	34	18	51	4	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	40	18	51	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	37	21	60	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	46	16	46	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	46	18	51	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)	9	26	20	57	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	51	15	43	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	19	54	2	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	43	17	49	2	6	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	37	19	54	1	3	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	49	15	43	3	9	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Church of England School, Wantage OX12 7PW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were really polite and friendly and helped us to learn a lot about what you do and what you enjoy. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and is improving.

What we found about your school

- It is a friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- You achieve the standards you should in English and mathematics and your teachers are trying hard to enable you to do better than this.
- You show an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and make an outstanding contribution to your school and the wider community.
- Your teachers usually plan interesting lessons and most mark your work well so that you know what you have to do to improve.
- You benefit from an interesting curriculum and a good range of after-school clubs as well as some very interesting visits and visitors.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- You are doing better in mathematics this year, but we have asked the teachers to give you more problems to solve so that you learn how to use the skills and knowledge you have gained.
- We think you can improve your spelling and punctuation and would like your teachers to let you use dictionaries and word banks to help with your writing.
- We have asked the teachers to make sure that you don't have too long to discuss ideas with your talk partners and that you have enough time to complete your tasks.
- We would like the school governors to have more training to help them judge how well the school is doing.

We are sure that all of you will do everything you can to help all adults who work with you to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.