

# Grove Road Primary School

Grove Road, Tring, HP23 5PD

**Inspection dates** 21–22 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching does not meet the needs of all learners sufficiently well.
- Some teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to explain their learning.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics in some year groups has not been strong enough, and these pupils have some catching up to do to reach the levels of attainment they are capable of.
- Boys achieve less well than girls, and pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding perform less well than other pupils.
- Too many teachers do not teach early reading skills and spelling with sufficient accuracy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leadership has been strengthened significantly. There is a strong team of leaders who have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governing body provides an exceptional level of challenge and support. Governors have taken their responsibilities very seriously and rigorously hold the school to account.
- Pupils really enjoy being at school. They say that they enjoy their lessons and their teachers work hard to make learning fun and relevant.
- The curriculum has been improved, and this is having a positive effect on improving boys' learning, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is improving. There is more teaching that is now good or outstanding. Inadequate teaching is a thing of the past.
- Teachers have got better at challenging pupils with more difficult work.
- Pupils generally behave very well around school and in class. The school's behaviour policy is liked by parents and pupils and is working well. Disruptive behaviour is increasingly uncommon.
- Bullying is very rare and is dealt with quickly. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know that adults care about their concerns and worries.
- Girls perform particularly well at this school. Boys are beginning to catch up. The gaps between different groups are smaller now than they have been in the past.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons and 2 small-group sessions led by teaching assistants. Five of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work. They scrutinised data about pupils’ attainment and progress, governors’ minutes and notes, policy documents and documentation relating to pupils’ safety and safeguarding.
- Inspectors talked to two groups of pupils formally and spoke with several groups of pupils around the school.
- Inspectors took account of 80 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), considered the views expressed in correspondence and talked to groups of parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- The lead inspector took account of the findings of his monitoring visit in May 2012.

## Inspection team

Michael Sheridan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Diana Pearce

Additional Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as pupil premium, is much lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well below the national average.
- Few pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. Most pupils speak English as a first language.
- The school was last inspected in October 2011 when it was judged to require a notice to improve because of inadequacies in leadership and management. The school was monitored in May 2012 and found to be making good progress against the areas of concern identified at the last inspection.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2012. A new deputy headteacher is working in school for a day a week until she takes up her post full time in January 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets minimum standards for progress and attainment.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by continuing to work with teachers whose practice requires improvement by:
  - ensuring that coaching and mentoring are sharply focused on improving individual teachers' skills
  - making sure all teachers are consistently applying the school's policies for teaching and behaviour
  - sharing existing good practice in the use of questioning and meeting the needs of different learners so that it becomes commonplace.
- Improve the consistency of teaching of early reading skills and spelling by:
  - ensuring that lower-attaining pupils are always given reading books that are at the right level that allow them to practise blending sounds to read.
  - making sure that teachers and teaching assistants have further professional development in the teaching of the sounds that letters make
  - helping adults in school to recognise the importance of using 'pure sounds' when practising blending.
- Improve outcomes in English and mathematics for underperforming groups, most notably pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, pupils with special educational needs and boys, by:
  - regularly monitoring the progress these pupils are making and talking to teachers about the importance of accelerating progress for these groups
  - ensuring no opportunity is missed to provide additional support to accelerate progress and close gaps in attainment
  - making sure pupil premium funding is making a difference in closing the gaps in learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Girls' achievement is generally better than that of the boys. Boys and girls are making similar progress this year, but too many boys are not making the accelerated progress they need to catch up in areas where they have fallen behind. Pupils generally reach above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- Girls perform better than boys when learning about the sounds that letters make (phonics). Many more girls met the expected level in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 than boys. Boys are catching up, so the gap this year is likely to be much smaller, but it is still evident.
- The additional support provided through pupil premium funding had some impact in closing the gaps in attainment in English and mathematics for a small number of pupils last year. The plans set out by leaders and governors are targeted in the right places and aimed at helping more pupils who have fallen behind to catch up more quickly.
- Pupils perform better in English than in mathematics. Too many pupils have not made expected progress in mathematics. The current Year 6 made better progress last year but still have some ground to make up to do as well as they should. The good-quality teaching in Year 6 makes this a realistic possibility.
- Gaps between different groups are beginning to close. There are fewer gaps because leaders are checking the progress different groups make and are making teachers aware of these gaps through regular meetings.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make slower progress than their peers. There are signs that this is improving in some classes, but not all.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving. More teaching is good or outstanding and inadequacies have been eradicated. The teaching that still requires improvement is much more secure than it was a year ago.
- Teaching requires improvement because too many lessons do not meet all pupils' needs. In some lessons, pupils working at a lower level do not get suitable work to make sure they make rapid progress. One example of this is where some pupils are given reading books which are too hard for them to practise the skills they are learning.
- Teachers are not always precise enough when teaching the sounds that letters make. This means that pupils hear the wrong sounds. This makes it more difficult for pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read to blend these sounds together to make words.
- Some teachers are expert at asking questions that get pupils to think hard. When this happens, pupils make good progress because they have the opportunity to clarify what they understand by explaining it to others. These teachers are quick to spot when pupils get things wrong so they can provide additional support or explanation.

- Some teachers spend too long explaining the tasks that are to be completed. When this happens, pupils do not learn as much as in other lessons because they do not have enough opportunity to talk about new knowledge.
- Teachers plan carefully to make learning fun. Pupils often bubble with enthusiasm and become immersed in the topics they are working on. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving boys' achievement.
- Marking gives pupils useful feedback. Teachers have a good understanding of the school's marking policy. Pupils improve their work because they respond positively to their teachers' advice.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour around school is very good. They move around the school with maturity, using their common sense when making decisions. The school has been successful in improving behaviour so that pupils know what is expected of them.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. Pupils open doors for visitors and each other, and talk in a cordial fashion. They are very proud of their school and know that their behaviour is important in creating a positive attitude.
- The school has successfully introduced a new reward system. Pupils respond well to the clear guidelines and the system of rewards and warnings. In a few lessons, teachers are reluctant to give warnings for silly behaviour and, in these lessons, pupils can remain off task for too long.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that bullying is very rare and is dealt with effectively. Parents who spoke with inspectors say that behaviour in the playground has improved as a result of play space being reorganised and activities improved.
- Pupils learn about staying safe. They understand the kind of steps they should take to remain safe when in school, around the community and when on the internet. Pupils say that they feel comfortable talking to adults about issues that worry them.
- Attendance is above average. A few pupils have a poor record of attendance, and the school is working with their families to improve this.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders have a good understanding of the task ahead and are in a strong position to tackle the remaining issues that prevent the school being judged good overall.
- The headteacher has quickly earned the respect and trust of parents and staff. She has set out a clear and ambitious vision for the school which stakeholders have signed up to. She is focused on driving school improvement and is uncompromising in her expectations.
- The headteacher is well supported by a team of talented leaders. The senior leadership team works well together in driving improvements. Leaders are in no doubt about the work they have to do. Their actions so far have been successful in improving teaching, behaviour and the curriculum.

- Leaders have the right policies in place. They have set clear expectations that teachers are working towards meeting. The areas for development in this report are already being tackled by leaders and teachers. Their self-evaluation is accurate.
- Teachers are very positive about the changes taking place. They say that leaders are clear about what they are expected to do. Teachers are excited about their own professional development and are eager to continue improving.
- Performance management systems are new. Details of previous performance management systems have been unavailable to the current leadership team. Leaders have set up a robust system to make clear the priorities for individual teachers and link future pay increases to performance.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the new leadership team. Parents accurately recognise that, while there is still work to do, the school is in a strong position to move forward successfully.
- The local authority has provided effective support over the past year. It secured effective temporary leadership and helped governors build a strong permanent leadership team to move the school forward. The local authority has monitored the school and provided guidance to teachers through consultants.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an exceptionally accurate understanding of the issues that the school has faced and have been resolute in holding leaders to account for the necessary improvements. Governors have a detailed understanding of the progress that pupils make. They analyse the school's data independently of the senior leadership team so they are able to offer in-depth and robust challenge. They have been relentless in their pursuit of improvements and have supported senior leaders in making difficult decisions over the past 12 months. Their plans for using the pupil premium funding are based on ensuring no pupil is left behind. They have approved plans to use the funding to provide additional small-group support and resources for pupils who need to catch up and have set challenging targets for this work. Governors have a secure understanding of the performance management process in school and the links this has to pay. Governors bring a wide range of professional skills which are used very well to support the school and its management.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117341
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	399694

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julian Crane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Sanderson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 822056
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 382615
<b>Email address</b>	admin@groveroad.herts.sch.uk



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