

The Grove Primary School

Asfordby Road, , Melton Mowbray, LE13 0HN

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is not enough good teaching, particularly in mathematics, to ensure that pupils achieve well in all classes.
- Progress in mathematics is too slow because teachers do not always teach basic number skills well. As a result, many pupils lack the ability to calculate quickly in their heads.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their number skills in all subjects.
- Not all teachers give pupils sufficient guidance in their marking to show them how to improve their work in mathematics.
- A small minority of pupils misbehave when playing outside and moving around the school. This causes some pupils to feel unsafe.
- The leaders, including the governing body, do not evaluate the quality of teaching and marking with sufficient rigour to improve their performance and ensure consistently good progress through the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in English is good and improving well because of effective work by the headteacher and senior leaders to improve the teaching.
- Teachers teach reading skills well and give pupils many good opportunities to read and write in all subjects.
- The school has worked effectively with parents and carers to improve attendance.
- Pupils behave well in class because teachers make the rules clear.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and profit from working alongside older pupils.
- The school provides a good range of visits and residential trips to make learning interesting.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of brief visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, parents and carers, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Terry Elston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- Pupils, including those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently achieved the Eco Award and Healthy Schools status.
- The care facilities before and after school managed by the governing body will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that achievement in mathematics is as good as in English by:
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to develop their mental calculations
 - providing training so that all teachers are confident teaching mathematics
 - giving pupils opportunities to use their mathematical skills in all subjects
 - giving clear guidance in the marking of pupils' work on how to improve
 - ensuring that teachers have opportunities to learn from the best practice in school.
- Make the leadership and management more effective by leaders:
 - giving teachers the benefit of regular and rigorous evaluations of the quality of their work
 - setting teachers clear targets to improve.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - providing clear guidance to staff who supervise pupils in the playground on how to manage behaviour
 - ensuring that there are sufficient staff to observe pupils in all areas of the playgrounds
 - having higher expectations of the way pupils move around the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in English. By the end of Year 6, while attainment is securely average in English, it is below average in mathematics because of pupils' relatively weak skills in mental calculations.
- Children join the school with skills below those typical of their ages, particularly in respect of their reading, writing and speaking. They make good progress and learn from the older pupils in the classes. Children do especially well in their early reading and writing because of the many opportunities provided to develop these skills in activities both indoors and outside.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is below average, but the latest tests at Year 2 show improvement on previous years. Pupils do well in reading, and pupils in Year 1 attained above-average scores in the latest tests.
- Pupils become increasingly good at building sounds into words and this gives them confidence to read challenging books. Progress in writing in Key Stage 1 is reasonable but some pupils, particularly boys, are slow to get started in lessons. Their best work is when the subject inspires them, and their writing about the character of Winnie the Witch was full of exciting words. In mathematics, pupils enjoy practical work and make good progress at tasks such as measuring common objects and exploring the characteristics of solid shapes.
- By the time they join Year 6, most read fluently and use their skills confidently to research their topics in books and on the internet. Their writing is mostly accurate and their work describing the features of an alien bug shows how well they can use words to capture the reader's imagination.
- In mathematics, even some older pupils find quick calculations difficult and have to add and subtract using their fingers. This affects the way they tackle all aspects of the subject, particularly when asked to solve problems. Pupils have few opportunities to practise their number skills in other subjects, although in one class they achieved well when applying their work on shapes to the design of gardens in Tudor times.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make steady progress but again, they do better in English than in mathematics. Those with reading difficulties make good progress because of the way they learn word-building skills.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress, and in the latest national tests achieved better than others in school. The school uses the designated funds well to support these pupils, including providing them with extra reading sessions, individual teaching and training for support staff. By measuring the impact of these measures, the school ensures that the money is spent wisely.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching explain why pupils learn faster in some classes than others. Learning is faster when pupils move quickly from one task to the next and work at activities matched to their abilities. In mathematics, however, pupils sometimes have to work

too long as a whole class, and this means that much of the work for lower attaining pupils is too hard and that for the most able too easy.

- The teaching of basic reading and writing skills is often good, so pupils learn how to gain information quickly and write with confidence. In mathematics, the best lessons have pupils mastering basic number skills well with quick-fire questions that give them all opportunities to answer questions. Where learning is slower, these sessions are too laborious or the more confident pupils whose hands shoot up are allowed to do all the work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and are quick to point out how well pupils have done. However, not all teachers give them sufficient guidance on how their work could be improved. This means that pupils in some classes keep making the same mistakes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from extra help that ensures that they make similar progress to that of others in school. They enjoy the sessions when withdrawn from class for small-group work with teaching assistants, but not all teaching assistants have the skills to ensure that these pupils make the same progress as those with the teacher in the classroom.
- In typical lessons, teachers ensure that pupils behave well by making the rules clear and using the systems of rewards and sanctions consistently well. This means that lessons are orderly and rarely disrupted. This is valued by pupils who say how this helps them learn. As one said, 'My teacher is strict sometimes, but it helps us get the work done.'
- The good teaching of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage accounts for their good progress. The teachers ensure that tasks are challenging and achievable and provide children with ample opportunities to continue their learning outside.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- At playtimes, a few pupils, mostly boys, play rough games and this makes some feel unsafe. Occasionally, staff shortages mean that not all pupils are in full view of adults and so they misbehave without being noticed.
- Records show that incidents of bullying have decreased markedly over the last year, and pupils say how well any rare incidents are handled by staff. Around the school, however, some pupils forget the rules about walking on the left and this creates some disturbances as others get jostled.
- The rate of temporary exclusions in the past has been high, but effective work by the school to improve behaviour has reduced these incidents considerably.
- In class, behaviour is nearly always good. Pupils listen carefully to the teachers and get on quickly with their work. They understand the rules for good behaviour and concentrate well.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and one another. They listen carefully to the views of others in discussions and respect those who have opinions different from their own.
- Pupils have a good awareness of hazardous situations and how to avoid being hurt. They appreciate the potential dangers of unsupervised use of the internet and speak highly of the way the school teaches them how to use computers safely.

- Pupils say how much they enjoy school, and their parents and carers endorse this. Good work by the school to impress upon pupils and their parents and carers to improve attendance means that absence rates have fallen greatly over the last year and are now below those found nationally.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over the last year, the lack of formal observations of teaching helps to account for inconsistencies in the teaching and the rate of progress across the school. Leaders have conducted useful 'learning walks' to gain some view of teaching and set whole-school targets. However, these have provided too little guidance to individual teachers on the quality of their work or to leaders and the governing body when considering teachers' pay based on their performance. Teachers have few opportunities to learn from the best practice in school.
- The headteacher is respected as a leader and sets ambitious targets for the school to achieve. He works closely with other senior staff to make rigorous analyses of pupils' progress and test scores, and to identify areas for improvement. Protracted consultations with staff over the arrangements for leaders' lesson observations have delayed plans to monitor teaching and learning. These have now been resolved and leaders are due to recommence formal monitoring of lessons later this term.
- The leaders' commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils is evident in their identification and support of underachieving groups such as boys and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This, together with astute use of the funds for disadvantaged pupils, has helped to improve their achievements since the last inspection and shows the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Leaders make good use of local schools to provide joint, cost-effective training, based on the school's current needs. This has been helpful in raising attainment in writing but, in mathematics, teachers have not benefitted from sufficient training to ensure that all teach mathematics well.
- Safeguarding systems are robust and meet requirements. These are reviewed regularly by the leaders and the governing body.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. Their comments to inspectors and responses to the online questionnaires were generally positive, particularly in terms of the events provided to inform them about how their children are taught. A few, however, commented on the unacceptable behaviour of a few pupils.
- The activities provided for pupils are interesting, and the school has done much to raise boys' achievements by giving them tasks that they find interesting, such as writing alternative versions of traditional tales. Pupils have many good opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills in all subjects, but this is not so much the case with their mathematics skills.
- The school gives pupils many opportunities to reflect on their feelings and consider how they can help those suffering from hardships. Learning about people from different backgrounds and faiths gives pupils a clear insight into the diverse cultures in this country and beyond.
- The school has made some use of the expertise from the local authority to raise the quality of

teaching and learning. This support is less evident now that the service has been reduced

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good awareness of the school's effectiveness, including its performance compared with other schools, gained through regular visits and meetings with the headteacher and subject leaders. The governing body challenges the leaders and takes a full part in school improvement, although they have little opportunity this year to be involved in the evaluation of teachers' performance. Governors have benefitted from useful training, based clearly on the school's needs. Governors have a good awareness of the school's budget and have supported the leaders well in eliminating the deficit. They know how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent, why it is allocated in this way and the impact it has on pupils' academic and personal development.

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	119940
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	401890

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	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Horton
Headteacher	Mike Owen
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2009
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