

Grovelands Infant and Nursery School

Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 2EB

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The headteacher has brought about rapid improvements since the last inspection, ably supported by other leaders and governors. The collaborative work between leaders and staff means that new initiatives have been embedded quickly and effectively.
- Standards and progress have improved rapidly for all age groups, including those eligible for the pupil premium funding. Work seen during the inspection shows most pupils are now achieving above average standards.
- Teaching is good overall with emerging outstanding features. Teachers plan activities that are interesting so children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 want to learn more.
- Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in the development of their writing skills.
- Provision and support provided for pupils identified with special educational needs is a strength of the school's work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils look after each other in the playground and know how to work and play safely.
- Governors are impressive. They use their considerable knowledge and expertise to support and challenge the school well. They ensure that pupils and staff are safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all pupils are challenged in their learning all the time, particularly the more able.
- Written feedback does not consistently give specific information to help pupils understand how to improve their work further.
- Not all parents and carers know how they can support their child's learning at home.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out at short notice.
- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors made 12 short visits to group work sessions and classrooms to look at pupils' work, to hear them read and to review the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteachers, middle leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors took account of 62 responses to the online Parent View survey and 27 responses from staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including those related to self-evaluation, the school's own data on pupils' progress and attainment, planning and monitoring documents, including performance management procedures and outcomes, the governing body minutes and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Rundle, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Roger Parry

Additional inspector

Carole Skinner

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grovelands is a larger than average-sized infant and nursery school. It has a more stable school population than other schools in England as few pupils leave or join the school at times other than the usual ones. Children attend the nursery in either a morning or afternoon session.
- There are slightly more girls than boys. Three quarters of the pupils are from a White British background which is in line with average. Slightly more pupils than average have a first language believed not to be English.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well below average.
- When the school was last inspected in October 2011, it was given a 'notice to improve' in relation to pupils' attainment and progress. In a monitoring inspection of May 2012, it was judged to be making good progress in making improvements.
- The school manages a children's centre which is situated on the same site. It was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure even greater consistency in the quality of teaching by sharing the best practice further in:
 - using assessment information to plan activities that match the needs of pupils with different abilities and challenge all pupils' learning at all times
 - identifying the specific next steps in pupils' learning in written feedback.
- Increase the level of communication with parents and carers, particularly about how they can support their child's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils enter the nursery with development levels in line with or just below those expected for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage especially in their reading and writing skills and social and emotional development. Children are given a broad range of activities that help them move quickly from mark making to writing. For example, children enjoyed drawing figures and letters on the playground and writing reports during role play as police officers equally well. It is impressive that children in the Reception class are starting to use joined-up cursive writing so early in their education.
- Pupils make rapid progress and attain well above average standards in their understanding and use of phonics (linking letters and sounds). They benefit from working in small groups with teachers and teaching assistants who have high expectations and secure subject knowledge of how to teach phonics and reading to young children.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making much swifter progress than in previous years and standards are rising quickly within each year group. Pupils are working at above average levels for their age and are on track to reach well above expected standards by the end of Key Stage 1. At times, the more able children are not challenged enough and are capable of even more.
- Work seen in lessons, books and displays around the school show pupils are making rapid and sustained improvements in writing and mathematics, reflecting the school's focus on improving these areas. In one Year 2 class pupils were using a broad range of adjectives and similes to accurately and imaginatively describe different settings in preparation for writing their own stories later in the week. They were excited and motivated by the work and wanted to become 'successful seals'. In Reception, pupils were making good progress in understanding 'more than' and 'fewer than' when putting gingerbread men on and off buses.
- Most pupils are becoming confident readers and are happy to read in front of their friends and adults. Pupils in one guided reading lesson were equally good at recalling information from storybooks about a new coat and non-fiction books on aeroplanes and airports. When inspectors listened to pupils read, most were able to use their phonics to help them identify the letters and sounds in new or unfamiliar words. As one child said, 'I have to sound out the letters so I can blend them to help me make the word.'
- Disabled pupils and those identified with special educational needs receive good support and so make the same good progress and attain as well as others in the school. Those eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium funding make the same good progress and attain as well as others in the school in reading and writing and do slightly better than others in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved rapidly. School leaders and local authority officers have provided high levels of training and opportunities to see and share best practice. Teachers have taken on board the training which has been embedded swiftly and with enthusiasm. As a result, teaching is good overall. An increasing number of lessons are showing outstanding features although a small number of lessons still require improvement. New teachers to the profession have matured into highly competent and confident teachers and make a valuable contribution to the school's work.
- In the best lessons teachers have very high expectations and use assessment information to plan work thoroughly to match the needs of different abilities in the class. As a result, all pupils are stretched in their learning, particularly the most able. In these lessons, teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very effectively to extend pupils' initial responses and to develop their independent thinking.
- Teachers give lots of positive praise to encourage children and pupils in their work. They observe pupils' work and give good instant feedback that tells them how well they are doing

and precisely what they need to do next to improve further. In the best written feedback teachers give specific information through the '2 stars and a wish' model on how pupils can improve their work and follow this up in future lessons. However, not all marking is of this consistently high standard. All lessons are brisk and purposeful so pupils enjoy their work, are enthusiastic and are motivated to learn.

- Teachers use a broad range of strategies and resources, including information and communication technology, to engage and interest pupils. Even the youngest children are confident when using computers and the class electronic whiteboard to manipulate information.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. Following training, their roles have changed significantly to become more focused on supporting learning within the classroom. They are skilled at providing one-to-one and small-group support in lessons, particularly for disabled pupils or for pupils identified with special educational needs.
- Teachers know the children and pupils really well resulting in excellent relationships in all classes. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors said that teachers and teaching assistants are very approachable and happy to discuss any concerns they may have about their child. A small minority indicate they would welcome more communication, particularly in how they can support their child's learning at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy lessons and show positive attitudes towards their work. They want to be in school and are keen to learn. Most are punctual when arriving for school at the start of the day and move enthusiastically back into class after playtimes and lunch. Attendance has improved following the focused work of leaders and is above average.
- Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school because pupils know what is acceptable. Occasionally, it slips in lessons that require improvement but gentle reminders from teachers or teaching assistants quickly bring attention back to learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 respond positively to the reward systems and are particularly enthusiastic about the having their name in the 'Gold Book'.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults which is reflected in the welcome they gave to inspectors. Parents, carers, staff and pupils are generally positive about the standard of behaviour in the school. Pupils say behaviour is usually good, especially in the playground and that 'teachers deal with any naughty children'.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and good attention is given to children's safety in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially when using the large equipment outside. Parents and carers say their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They have good opportunities for reflection, including fostering their curiosity about the world when looking at signs of winter, when exploring different times in people's lives and through assemblies. They use their writing skills to communicate with children in Pennsylvania and learn about a different culture. Equally, they learn about their own culture and environment through visits, eco-warriors and art. They undertake responsibilities seriously and are particularly proud when they are appointed as buddies.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been tenacious in order to bring about the necessary improvements to the school's work. She is unafraid to tackle difficult issues to ensure that children and pupils receive the best opportunities. Together with other leaders, she has set high expectations and raised aspirations of pupils' capabilities. As a result, the school has improved rapidly and pupils are achieving well. All staff are firmly behind the changes; as one said, 'We all want the same

thing.’

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, make checks on the breadth of the school’s work regularly and rigorously. Senior leaders, and increasingly middle leaders, evaluate the findings and use them to identify the next priorities for improvement. Leadership of teaching and learning is leading to improvements but some inconsistencies remain in the level of challenge for all pupils and the quality of written feedback given to pupils.
 - Observations of teaching are accurate and feedback to individual teachers links well to the aims of the school. Teachers are held to account thoroughly for the progress pupils make in their class. This links to secure procedures for teacher performance expectations and salary progression.
 - The local authority has provided a broad range of support and training which has helped bring improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement. The support has reduced as the school has improved. Teachers have benefited from good opportunities to observe and share best practice in their own and a partnership school, which has helped to develop the collaborative approach and urgency to improve.
 - The indoor and outdoor school environment is an exciting place for children and pupils to explore learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage where equipment and resources are extensive. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, have equality of access to the curriculum and enrichment activities and consequently all pupils are now achieving well.
 - A large majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Many say it ‘feels like being part of a family’. They recognise the improvements and welcome the increased communication via the school’s website and ‘parent-text’. They comment positively on the ‘WOW boards’ in the early years area and the stickers in home-link books for Years 1 and 2 that help them discuss the day’s learning with their child.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - A strong and productive working partnership has been established quickly between the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body with a shared and ambitious vision for the future. Governors bring a wealth of expertise and willingly undertake training to help them undertake their role effectively. They are skilled at interrogating assessment data and the school’s monitoring information. As a result, they ask probing questions about pupils’ achievement and how this links to the quality of teaching in different classes and age groups. They hold school leaders robustly to account for the school’s work and ensure that teachers’ salary awards are linked to how well pupils achieve. They tackle any underperformance robustly to ensure pupils have the best opportunities while they are at the school. They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet all requirements.
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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	125056
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	399719

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

Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tyrone Lawless
Headteacher	Liz Nichols
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 October 2011
Telephone number	01932 227816
Fax number	01932 269590
Email address	info@grovesland.surrey.sch.uk

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