

Grove C of E Primary School

North Drive, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 7PW

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well and this good progress continues throughout the rest of the school so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is similar to that seen nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress well due to good, well-targeted support.
- Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of interesting and challenging activities that engage their interest. Additional support and intervention sessions enable pupils who are a little behind to catch up.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they are well mannered and polite. They feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher's drive to raise pupils' achievement has been strengthened by the reorganisation of the senior leadership team. A determined focus to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement has been successful.
- Members of the governing body provide good levels of support and visit the school regularly to sit in and support lessons, which helps them to understand how well pupils are achieving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In some lessons, the pace of lessons is too slow and the teachers miss opportunities to encourage the more-able pupils to move on to more difficult work soon enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are not as good or consistent as they should be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons, all jointly with members of the senior leadership team, observing all teachers who were present during the inspection. The inspector heard some pupils read and held a meeting with a group of pupils.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the Chair and another member of the Governing Body, school staff and with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met with a parent who had requested a meeting.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), three letters from parents and responses by staff to their questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, priorities for development, achievement data and documents relating to safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Paul Edwards, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grove Church of England Primary is a smaller than average-sized school. However, the number of pupils on roll is increasing rapidly due to the doubling of its admission rates. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, changes have been made to the senior leadership team, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher.
- A breakfast and after-school club, managed by the governing body, operates during term. This formed part of this inspection. A pre-school, privately managed, operates on the school site and is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring the pace of lessons is maintained and that more-able pupils are enabled to move on to more-challenging activities sooner, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring teachers encourage pupils to produce their best handwriting more often.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly those related to language development. They achieve well so they are well prepared for when they move into Year 1.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are much closer to the national average than seen at the time of the previous inspection, the result of improved teaching and focused activities for those pupils who need additional support. A good programme of teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make) provides pupils with a good foundation for developing their reading skills.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average in both English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, there has been a determined and effective focus on improving the rates of pupils' progress. Tracking and assessment information shows that most pupils are now making better than expected progress across all year groups. However, the school rightly acknowledges that more-able pupils should be making more-rapid progress in mathematics.
- The introduction of a scheme designed to stimulate boys' interest in reading has been effective. Consequently, boys are reading more often and more widely and this is having not only a good impact on their reading skills but also on their writing. The gap in attainment between boys and girls in all subjects has narrowed considerably because activities have been targeted well.
- There is clear evidence that pupils can write neatly and fluently, as seen in their practice books. However, the skills pupils have are not seen sufficiently often in their other written work because there is insufficient emphasis on this aspect.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Well-structured support packages and intervention sessions help these pupils to make progress in line with their classmates.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding mostly make progress broadly in line with their peers. The average point scores for those eligible for free school meals performed better than their classmates in the 2012 unvalidated national tests and assessments. Those from service families performed slightly less well in the same tests and assessments.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection is the result of improved monitoring of its quality and well-structured training and support for all staff. Good teaching is evident in all year groups and there are elements of outstanding practice across the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. In the best lessons, work is challenging and fully engages pupils' attention. For example, in a good Year 5/6 lesson, pupils' understanding of percentages progressed well because activities were well matched to their prior learning and developing skills.
- Teachers' questioning skills are used to good effect to involve pupils and engage their interest. In a very effective 'booster' session for Year 6 pupils, the teacher's perceptive questioning developed the pupils' confidence and understanding of how to calculate percentages. They also make good use of questioning to determine pupils' level of understanding.
- Teachers generally keep lessons moving at a brisk pace so that pupils work hard and do their best. Occasionally, however, the pace slows a little and teachers miss opportunities to move pupils on to more challenging work sooner in lessons; this is particularly so for the more able.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and systematically, and pupils say they find the teachers' comments useful in helping them to improve their work. Pupils regularly practise their handwriting, ensuring they develop good skills – however, teachers do not demand pupils consistently produce their best handwriting as often as they should.
- Teaching assistants are utilised effectively, supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons, closing the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and really enjoy learning. They are polite, keen to engage visitors in conversation and very sociable. Behaviour in lessons is good and they play sensibly and responsibly on the playground. Very occasionally, where the pace of lessons slows, some pupils' attention wanders and they lose concentration.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View, almost without exception, feel that behaviour is good and that their children are kept safe. Pupils and staff agree. Cycling proficiency and training courses provide pupils with an understanding of dangers on the road. Visits by the 'Life Bus' enhance pupils' awareness of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking.
- Pupils are fully aware of the behaviour policy. Many have been involved in reviewing the school policy, and consequently they know what is expected of them. Where behaviour is a concern, parents and carers are involved in helping bring improvements, but the emphasis on 'values education' works well with adults modelling their expectations. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare but have confidence that staff will sort it out should any occur. They have a clear understanding of different types of bullying such as name-calling and physical, that involving texting and through social networking. Almost all parents and carers responding to Parent View agree that bullying is dealt with effectively on the rare occasions that it happens.
- Attendance is broadly average and persistent absenteeism is rare. Senior leaders discourage term-time holidays and regular attendance is rewarded.

The leadership and management are good

- The recent expansion of the senior leadership team has enabled responsibilities to be distributed and this has had a good impact on school improvement. Together with her senior leaders, the headteacher has set a clear direction for improvement. School self-evaluation demonstrates an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and those areas in need of improvement.
- Senior leaders regularly check the performance of teachers. Those new to teaching value the good support and guidance they receive from senior leaders. Training is provided to improve teachers' skills in key areas. For example, the training of a senior leader as a 'maths specialist' has raised the quality of teaching in this subject through mentoring and coaching.
- The development of its pupil-tracking system has enabled the senior leaders to share the detailed information of pupils' achievement with all staff. Consequently, they all are able to take responsibility for ensuring pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. A wide range of clubs, visits and visitors contributes very effectively to pupils' curriculum experiences. A themed approach to the curriculum enables pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills through topics like the Second World War. Special days such as 'India Day' raise pupils' awareness of other cultures.

- Senior leaders work hard to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all curriculum activities and that there is no discrimination. The school works very well with parents and carers. Workshops provide them with a good understanding of how the school approaches the teaching of mathematics and phonics, for example. Effective partnerships have been established to provide support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and this ensures they make good progress.
 - The breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a safe and secure environment.
 - The local authority has provided a moderate amount of support for this good school and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching. It has also helped to strengthen the leadership skills of staff.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have undergone training to improve their ability to support senior leaders in their drive for improvement. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Training in data analysis helps them to ask knowledgeable questions as to how well pupils are achieving and how it compares to other schools. They undertake training to help them fulfil their statutory duties. Safeguarding procedures, for example, are fully implemented and effective. Governors keep a watchful eye on the school budget. They monitor expenditure well and the use of the pupil premium is scrutinised to ensure it has a good impact on the progress of those for whom it is intended. They check that teachers' progression along the salary scale is a reward for their impact on improving pupils' achievement.
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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	123149
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406142

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	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maggie Mellersh
Headteacher	Wendy Foster
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 February 2011
Telephone number	01235 769867
Fax number	01235 769867
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