

# The Grove Primary School

Oakfield Lane, The Grove, Consett, County Durham, DH8 8AP

**Inspection dates** 26-27 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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

- Whatever their individual starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 they reach standards at least in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is at least good and on occasion it is outstanding. During this inspection teaching observed was never less than good.
- Pupils stated that they felt happy, safe and well cared for by all staff. They appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities provided for them and they clearly enjoy learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and feel that their children are very well cared for. It is clear that the school lives up to its motto 'The Grove School Cares'.
- Around the school pupils are considerate and polite. They are keen to learn and try their very best to succeed. Pupils' good and sometimes exemplary behaviour in lessons helps them to make good progress.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has worked diligently to secure improvements in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. They have high aspirations for all pupils.
- A relentless focus on what is happening in the classroom and how it can be made even better has driven improvement. There is highly effective additional adult support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to lead to consistently outstanding progress.
- Whilst pupils' progress in writing is good, it is not yet as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils' handwriting skills are not sufficiently well developed.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and the school's senior staff. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to allow results to be shown. However, inspectors took account of the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents, as well as a letter from a parent, a telephone call from a parent and discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also received and took account of 18 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, the information the school keeps on pupils' current progress and achievement, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and the school's safeguarding information.
- The inspection team observed pupils at morning playtime and lunchtime, and attended an assembly.

## Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Sleightholme	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care or from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British background.
- A higher percentage of pupils than average enter and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year.
- The school runs a breakfast club and provides after-school care for pupils.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved external accreditation in the form of the Anti-bullying Award, Eco Schools Silver Award, Rights Respecting status and the Investing in Children Award.

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

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding in order to accelerate pupils' progress further and to raise standards by:
  - providing opportunities for teachers to share the very best practice within the school and in other schools
  - developing the skills of all teachers and teaching assistants so that the questioning of pupils and the pace of learning are as good as the very best in the school
  - ensuring that teaching resources are always used effectively to support pupils' understanding
  - reminding pupils of success criteria during lessons, so that they know where they are up to and what they have to do next.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write at length and to practise and develop their writing skills in different subjects
  - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting by developing their technical skills of letter formation and writing in a joined script.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Lesson observations, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at work in their books confirm the school's own view that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below and often well below those expected for their age. This fluctuates from year to year. This is particularly true in relation to their communication skills, their social development and their understanding of things around them. Children quickly settle to work and have access to a broad range of exciting, challenging and stimulating activities. While they leave this stage with skills still below those expected for their age, they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils continue to make good gains throughout Key Stage 1. Standards have recently improved and are now broadly in line with national averages. Pupils are well motivated and eager to learn and achieve, as illustrated in a successful Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were stimulated to identify, name and explore the properties of 3D shapes in a challenging activity.
- Progress accelerates across Key Stage 2 so that by Year 6 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at least in line with national averages. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, performance in writing is not yet as strong as in the other two subjects and pupils' handwriting skills require further development.
- Improvements in the ways pupils are assessed and their progress tracked are ensuring that any pupils who fall behind are identified promptly and helped to catch up. The precise match of work to their ability is helping to ensure pupils make good progress.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress in line with their classmates relative to their starting points. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 they often attain as highly as others in their age group. This improvement is because of the recent focus on developing pupils' personal skills and emotional well-being along with their academic skills. The work of the school's pastoral support worker is having a particularly positive impact.
- Good provision for those who are disabled or have special educational needs ensures their progress is at least in line with their peers and attainment is generally above that of similar pupils nationally. This is the result of effective support to meet their learning needs.
- Standards in reading are good. Pupils delight in their reading of a range of authors and styles of texts. The rigorous programme for teaching reading across the school has enabled all pupils to acquire new skills quickly and successfully.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good with some that is outstanding. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has led to pupils' good achievement. The development of thorough systems for checking the work of teachers has secured these improvements.
- In the best lessons teachers employ imaginative and stimulating strategies to interest pupils. This was evident in a successful lesson for older pupils who were challenged to analyse and respond to a persuasive text about proposals for change from a local secondary school. Sharp questioning by the teacher and a brisk pace to the lesson ensured pupils were very well motivated and engaged.
- Not all teaching was as good as this, however. In the few less successful lessons questioning of pupils was not sufficiently focused. The pace then slows and so does the rate of learning and pupils lose interest. On occasion, teachers do not remind pupils of the success criteria during the lesson to allow them to reflect on how well they are doing. Sometimes, resources are not used well enough to support activities. For example, on occasion, resources such as information and communication technology are not used to best effect.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well. Teaching assistants are

consistently used well to help pupils with their individual support programmes based on their specific needs. The school checks carefully to make sure that the extra help is improving the progress of these pupils.

- There have been significant improvements in the use of marking. Teachers are consistent in providing effective written feedback to pupils on how they can improve their work. Pupils have the opportunity to respond to this marking and are very positive about its usefulness.
- Pupils are given individual targets in order to work towards the next level of learning. Pupils were aware of these targets and of what they have to improve. This system is used consistently well across the school.

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

- Behaviour in and around the school is good because of the very positive relationships that exist between adults and pupils. In lessons pupils sustain their concentration for long periods and are well motivated to succeed. Adults have high expectations of all pupils. One pupil observed, 'We have lovely, caring teachers and friendly children in our school.'
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour in the school. Typically, pupils are friendly, open and have very good manners. They are respectful of each other and usually listen to each other's viewpoints with tolerance and sensitivity. As one parent commented, 'The school is a wonderful, aspirational place for my child to visit on a daily basis.'
- Pupils enjoy learning. They generally work well together, sharing ideas and supporting each other. For example, older pupils support younger pupils and act as supportive buddies, particularly at playtime and lunchtime. They welcome the opportunity to take responsibility as members of the school council, as librarians or as 'rights-respecting ambassadors' who remind others of their rights and responsibilities.
- Behaviour is managed well, particularly in the way the school supports pupils who are emotionally fragile. Carefully tailored support programmes and the intervention of the school's pastoral support worker help them to become more resilient and confident as learners.
- Pupils were very clear that there is no bullying in the school, although they were aware of the forms this can take, such as name-calling and racist bullying. They have complete confidence in staff to sort out any minor incidents that may occur and so feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- The school has made concerted efforts to raise attendance rates but levels remain below the average. A small number of pupils whose particular circumstances present challenges in relation to levels of attendance have had a negative impact. Pupils' punctuality is good.
- Pupils very much value the school's merit and reward systems which, they recognise, support and encourage them to give of their best at all times. Only on very rare occasions does pupil attention wane a little in lessons when teaching is not quite as stimulating.

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

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have skilfully developed a team of leaders to take on additional responsibilities. This has broadened the experience and knowledge of these teachers and strengthened the capacity of the school to improve further. However, they have not yet created sufficient opportunities for the very best practice in teaching to be shared across the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their ability to check the work of the school has improved since the last inspection.
- The school's focus on improving teaching has been successful. Systematic checks on the quality of teaching and information about pupils' progress identify accurately the next steps for improvement.
- Improvements have been underpinned by good support and training for teachers. All staff have

clear targets for further improvement. There is a clear link between teachers' pay and the quality of teaching. Teaching assistants play an important role in pupils' learning and they have benefited from professional training to support pupils effectively. As a result, there is a team approach and a commitment to improvement.

- Pupils of all backgrounds have equal opportunities for success and any suggestion of discrimination is tackled effectively. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively to support eligible pupils through a range of strategies so that they make good headway and reach standards above those achieved by similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced through subjects and the range of activities provided. The curriculum is good. Visits, visitors and good links with the local and wider community enrich learning and broaden pupils' horizons. Older pupils welcome the opportunity of a residential visit to the Lake District.
- Leaders recognise that the curriculum is not yet outstanding because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing and handwriting skills in a range of contexts. This contributes to them not attaining such good standards as in reading and mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides good, light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are experienced and knowledgeable about the work of the school. This is because they make frequent visits to monitor all aspects of the school's work and, consequently, can hold senior leaders to account as well as offering appropriate support. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how the school's performance compares with other schools nationally. They are well informed about the ways in which the performance of staff is being managed and how it is linked to their pay progression. Governors have access to appropriate development opportunities. They are aware of the way in which the pupil premium has been spent and the positive impact this has had. Finances are managed well.

## 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>	114046
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	401402

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>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Hillery
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Hume
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 502938
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