

Grove House Nursery and Infant Community School

Gilpins Ride, Littlefields, Dereham, NR19 1BJ

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good and improving progress during their time in school and their achievement is good. This is because teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Lessons are fun for pupils and they enjoy their learning and behave well. Pupils work well together to help each other in class and around the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults to help them if they have a problem.
- Parents are supportive of the school and acknowledge the improvements that are being made.
- The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership. Her high ambition for the school is shared by all members of staff and governors.
- The newly formed senior leadership team is highly skilled. Their strong team approach has been successful in improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The new federation is proving highly effective in improving the school as staff in both schools share skills and expertise across the federation.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of frequent educational visits and visitors to support their learning in class.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not make the best use of marking to give clear tips on what pupils could do next, or make sure pupils have learnt from the advice given.
- Teaching assistants do not always give pupils good support in lessons.
- There are not enough opportunities for parents of children in Nursery and Reception to contribute to their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. She saw eight lessons, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteachers.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 2, and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, deputy headteachers, subject leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. She had a conversation with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- The 23 responses to the online Parent View survey were considered alongside two letters from parents. The 16 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books as well as looking at pupils' work in all classrooms.
- A number of documents were looked at including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, school improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding files, data on pupils' current progress, and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national figure. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of the pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which at this school provides additional funding to be used for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is very high at double the national average.
- The school has been part of a hard federation with Kings Park Infants School since April 2013. They share an executive headteacher, senior leadership team and a governing body but are inspected separately.
- A playgroup operates on the same site but is led, governed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so as to further raise pupils' achievement by:
 - improving the comments made in marking so pupils are clear about how to make their work better
 - checking that pupils have responded by making improvements
 - making sure all teaching assistants provide consistently good support in lessons.
- Provide more opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills well below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in their learning but still enter the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age, especially in communication and literacy.
- In previous years children have not made expected progress in Reception and have entered Year 1 with skills still below those expected for their age. The appointment of a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader in January 2013 has transformed the rate of children's development and in summer 2013 children left Reception with skills typically expected for their age.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2 they attain levels broadly in line with the national average, which represents good progress from their low starting points.
- Teachers use information about how well pupils are doing to make changes to their teaching and help pupils learn more quickly. For example, last year children in Reception did not make expected progress in writing. Decisive action has been taken to increase opportunities for children to write in both Nursery and Reception. They now frequently choose writing activities for themselves in both classes, helping them to develop writing skills more quickly.
- If pupils do not make as much progress as they should they receive small-group teaching in either English or mathematics to help them catch up. These groups are frequently checked by the special educational needs coordinator, who makes sure the extra support is only given for as long as pupils need it. The school is making very good use of schemes to help pupils develop their speech and language more quickly.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium represent a very large group in the school. Careful checking of how well these pupils do alongside wise spending decisions, including employing a teacher to lead small groups across the federation, means the school has significantly narrowed the gap between the achievement of this group of pupils and their classmates. They now do as well as similar pupils in other schools.
- The successful achievement of all pupils demonstrates the success of the leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils enjoy reading and like sharing books with each other. Phonics is taught well and pupils do well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils do not achieve as well in reading by the end of Year 2. In response to the lower scores the school has already changed the way it teaches reading. School information on how well pupils are doing shows reading results are already improving.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers encourage parents to contribute to their children's learning and record what the children can do in their individual 'learning story' books. At present not all parents make contributions.
- Physical activity is given great importance throughout the school. Every class has its own outside area to support physical development. This provision, coupled with high quality teaching in physical education, helps pupils develop healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved and most is now either good or outstanding. The headteacher has successfully tackled and eliminated inadequate teaching so pupils are now taught consistently well and able to learn more quickly.
- In the best lessons teachers explain new concepts very well to pupils. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher showed her class how to understand multiplication in such a straightforward way that by the end of the lesson pupils of all abilities were able to complete multiplication questions and had made outstanding progress in their understanding.
- Teachers ask questions to check how well pupils are doing and to encourage them to think hard for themselves. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enjoy finding things out and making discoveries by themselves or with friends. Children love these challenges and are immensely proud when they are successful.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to check their own work, especially in writing, to make sure they have included key features such as capital letters and finger spaces. Pupils enjoy checking their own work.
- Presentation in pupils' books is improving rapidly, including their handwriting. The school has introduced 'cursive' handwriting in all classes; pupils in Year 2 have now developed a fluent joined-up style. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy practising their writing and are already beginning to join their letters. Pupils are very proud of their written work because it now looks much neater.
- In some classes teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils' learning by unobtrusively helping them when the teacher is talking and taking careful notes to check how well pupils are doing. This was seen very effectively in Year 2. This is not consistent in all classes. Sometimes teaching assistants just sit and listen to the teacher and sometimes they are too loud, so it is difficult for pupils to concentrate on what their teacher is telling them.
- Teachers do not always mark pupils' books in a way that helps to improve the work. Some simply write comments summarising what the pupil has done. Even when suggestions are made, teachers do not make sure pupils have responded by making improvements and learning from the guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a happy place where pupils feel safe to play and work happily together. They are polite and friendly to each other and adults.
- Pupils in all classes are keen to learn and concentrate hard in lessons so they can do their best. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other and this helps them make good progress in class.
- Attendance has been low but it is quickly improving because leaders and managers provide a wide range of excellent support to parents to encourage them to bring their children to school more regularly. This supportive approach is appreciated by the parents, and all those who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school keeps clear records if there is any misbehaviour and these show that incidents have

drastically reduced in number over the past 18 months. There have been no racist incidents or exclusions.

- Pupils are taught how to keep safe when crossing the road, using electricity and using computers. They are confident when explaining how to keep safe.
- Pupils in all classes are taught about bullying. A display in the Reception classroom about bullying was put together by all the children, who stated what a bully is and what you need to do if you feel you are being bullied. All pupils are confident that the adults in school will help if there is a problem.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has instilled high ambition in the entire school community at Grove House. She is an outstanding leader who expects, and is achieving, the highest standards in all areas of the school's work. She has led the school through a period of significant change in establishing a federation which is proving to be a highly effective and successful model.
- Middle managers have been in post since April. They are responsible for their subjects or other areas in both schools. They check how well pupils are doing in their subjects and have written plans for improvement. These plans are beginning to have an impact as pupils are now starting to learn more quickly.
- Leaders and managers work together to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a very accurate view of them which is used to write concise plans to improve the whole school. These plans draw on the strength and expertise in both schools in the federation. There is clear evidence that the school has the capacity for ongoing improvement.
- The headteacher has established a strong ethos of teamwork. During the inspection, leaders based in Kings Park School worked alongside the inspector because their responsibilities are to lead across the federation. Pupils' responses to adults from the other school showed that it is part of their everyday school life to work with these adults. Leaders' frequent monitoring across the two schools brings out the strengths of both schools and enables them to be used to bring about improvements.
- All leaders and managers check the quality of teaching and use their findings to set targets to help teachers improve their work. Targets are carefully linked to helping pupils learn more quickly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are provided with opportunities to watch other teachers across the federation. These supportive observations help teachers develop ideas to improve their own teaching.
- Pupils are taught interesting themes which teachers carefully link to pupils' learning in English and mathematics. By linking the subjects together pupils are learning well and showing greater enjoyment for their work. These themes are supported by a wide range of experiences. For example, a Year 1 theme on India was enriched by a day of Bollywood dancing.
- The school has clear plans for spending the additional funds available for primary school sport as part of the Olympic legacy. Working with cluster primary schools, a specialist teacher will be employed to train all teachers in delivering higher quality physical education lessons. This will ensure the impact of the funding is far reaching.

- Leaders and managers go 'above and beyond' in their support for all their families, especially those who are facing some form of hardship. They have used the pupil premium wisely to help this group of pupils to be successful in school, including to fund temporary transport to school.
- The school was previously led by a local authority headteacher. Since the appointment of the current permanent headteacher two years ago it has received limited support from the local authority and only one monitoring visit.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is a new body formed when the federation was established in April 2013. Members bring a wide range of skills and expertise to support and challenge the leadership of the school.
 - Governors have sought external advice to help them review their own effectiveness and development. They are committed to fulfilling their roles to the best of their capabilities, evident in the Chair currently attending a course on how to lead an effective governing body.
 - Governors have a clear policy review cycle and ensure all statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met.
 - The school's pay policy reflects how better teachers will be rewarded financially and this has been used to good effect.
 - Governors are provided with excellent information by all senior leaders about how well pupils are doing in both schools in the federation compared to pupils nationally. They use this information to make wise spending decisions, including about how to spend the pupil premium, to make sure everyone in school has the same chance to be successful.

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	120804
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	433152

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Bowman
Headteacher	Helen Parker (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2010
Telephone number	01362 694379
Fax number	01362 694379
Email address	head@grove.norfolk.sch.uk

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