

Grange Junior School

Grange Drive, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4JY

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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:

- In recent years pupils have not made enough progress and their attainment has not been high enough given their starting points.
- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been of high enough quality to secure good progress by pupils.
- Not all teachers regularly set a brisk pace to learning, or have high enough expectations. As a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.
- The match of tasks and questions to pupils of different abilities is not always challenging, especially in mathematics, and particularly for the most able.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to clarify and explain their thinking.
- Pupils do not reach a clear enough understanding of the next steps in their learning through feedback from marking, the use of target setting and opportunities to put advice about improvement into practice.
- When leaders check the quality of teaching, they do not always put enough emphasis on evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and learning.
- Advice to teachers about what they could do to improve their practice is not sharp enough.
- Leaders have devised a policy for teaching mathematical calculations, but they have not yet checked whether it is being consistently applied, or what impact it is having on learning.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new leadership team, well supported by middle leaders, has a clear understanding of weaknesses in provision and pupils' progress.
- Action taken has resulted in improvements in better tracking of pupils' progress and improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, behave well and feel safe in school.
- In 2013, attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in the school are making markedly better progress in reading and writing, though not in mathematics.
- Governors have a good understanding of their role. They are supportive of the leadership and confident in holding the school to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also heard a sample of pupils in Years 3 and 4 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school’s staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, vice chair and another member of the governing body, and a discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 51 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection, and spoke with small numbers of parents and carers accompanying their children to school.
- Inspectors also took account of the 16 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, performance management, the pupil premium, and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Warrant

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a primary school that is larger than average in size.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and the children of service families) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- In September 2012, the school federated with Grange Infant School. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher of the infant school have become headteacher and the deputy headteacher of the federated schools, and a single governing body has been formed to oversee both schools.
- The headteacher is also a Local Leader in Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school holds the International School (Intermediate) and Healthy Schools awards, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and 360° Certificate of Progress in E-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by ensuring that all teachers:
 - set consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement
 - set a regularly good pace to learning in order to build on pupils' positive motivation
 - make sure that pupils develop a clearer understanding of the next steps in their learning through improved feedback from marking, better use of target setting and opportunities to put advice about improvement into practice.
- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - providing consistently good challenge to pupils through an improved match of tasks and questions to the different groups, including the most able
 - making sure that pupils deepen their understanding through more consistently good opportunities to discuss and explain their thinking
 - ensuring the consistent application of the school's policy for teaching calculation, and monitoring and evaluating its impact.
- Ensure the school's checks on the quality of teaching and learning have a greater impact through:
 - a closer focus on the extent of pupils' progress and learning when judging the impact of teaching
 - giving sharper advice to teachers about what they could do to improve their practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the years since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has not been good enough.
- In the last three years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has been lower than in earlier years when it had been well above average. In 2011 and 2012, overall attainment was no more than broadly average.
- Since 2011, pupils have made too little progress, given their strong starting points on entry. Even though pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 improved appreciably in 2013, so that in reading, writing and mathematics it was a little above the national average, their progress was still little better than in the previous two years. While most groups of pupils have made less than good progress, national data show that too often the most able pupils, in particular, have not made the progress of which they were capable.
- The school's tracking of current year groups shows improvement in the extent of progress, but also inconsistency between subjects. Whereas pupils' progress in reading and writing has improved markedly, and is much more consistently good, their progress in mathematics remains slower in all year groups.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been variable like that of other pupils. However, these pupils are beginning to make improved progress, though more in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- Pupils are keen to participate in sports and other physical activities. For instance, pupils in Year 3 took part enthusiastically in a gymnastics lesson where they made good progress in meeting the physical challenges set for them.
- In national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, the gap between those supported by the pupil premium and others narrowed a little in mathematics in comparison with the previous year, but widened a little in writing and more considerably in reading. This represented a gap of about two and a half terms in mathematics, which is similar to the gap found nationally. The gap was three and a half terms in writing, and five terms in reading. However, inspection evidence shows that, like others, eligible pupils are currently making good progress in reading and writing, but that their progress in mathematics requires improvement.
- The school uses pupil premium funding appropriately, reflecting its commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination. The funding has been used principally to provide additional adult support for older pupils, in order to address identified weaknesses in aspects of reading and mathematics, and additional support for younger pupils to improve phonics (linking sounds and letters). The funding has also supported workshops designed to enhance the personal skills and confidence of these pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has not resulted in good progress by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection.
- Where teaching is less than good, the pace of lessons is often not sufficient to engage pupils fully in the learning, and expectations for achievement, including that of more able pupils, are not always high enough.
- The planning of lessons does not always support learning sufficiently well. The match of tasks to pupils' previous attainment is not consistently good enough to provide appropriate levels of challenge for the different groups. As a result, the least-able pupils on occasions find the tasks set too demanding, while the most able are insufficiently challenged.
- Furthermore, teachers too rarely match their questions well to the different groups, for example to encourage more-able pupils to display understanding through their explanations and reasoning. In addition, teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to clarify and

explain their thinking, for instance about their strategies to solve mathematical problems.

- Feedback to pupils does not support improvements in their learning well enough. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on teachers' suggestions for improvement, or to apply advice given. Although teachers mark work conscientiously, they do not harness pupils' keenness to improve as fully as they could by regularly indicating the next steps in their learning.
- In addition, too little teaching includes reference to pupils' learning targets. However, in a lesson in which pupils in Year 3 made good progress in recording the story of Goldilocks, one teacher successfully challenged pupils to find opportunities to meet their individual writing targets.
- Across the school, relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are good, which makes a significant contribution to the positive climate for learning. Most parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire agree that their children are happy at school.
- Notwithstanding the weaknesses identified, inspection evidence indicates that as a result of the drive of the new school leadership, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve, so that an increasing proportion is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils show pride in their school. Their attitudes to learning are positive, and mostly support their progress well. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions, and as a result, lessons flow smoothly and without interruptions.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They recognise the school's positive ethos, and say that the great majority respect others and behave well, and that members of staff set clear expectations for conduct and promote positive relationships.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and well mannered towards adults and other children. At break times pupils behave well in the playground. At lunchtimes, the atmosphere is calm and quiet in the hall where school meals are served, and also in classrooms where those who bring their own food eat. In whole-school assemblies, pupils listen intently and respond well to opportunities to reflect on the theme.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. In the surveys, most parents and carers, and all members of staff, agree that children are safe.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms that bullying may take. There are few instances of bullying, which are swiftly addressed. There have been no exclusions of any kind in recent years.
- Attendance is above average, with a below-average rate of persistent absence.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school's leadership and management require improvement because there has not been enough impact, over time, on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The new senior leadership team has fostered the professional development of the team of middle leaders. Together, they are focused on improving the outcomes for pupils through a range of activities to check the quality of teaching and learning, including the programme of classroom observations. However, in judging the quality of teaching during observations, not enough emphasis is placed on gauging the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and learning. In addition, the advice to teachers about what they should do to improve their practice is not sharp enough.
- However, the new leadership team successfully raised pupils' attainment in all subjects in 2013. Leaders have built on the school's positive ethos and are intent on aligning its culture for learning with that of the federated infant school. For instance, leaders have enhanced the use of data on pupils' performance, improved the rigour of arrangements to track pupils' progress, and introduced more robust systems for managing the performance of teachers.

- Senior leaders communicate an ambitious vision for the school and its further improvement, and set high expectations for staff and pupils. The good morale among members of staff and the evidently positive team spirit among middle leaders, are reflected in the staff survey. All staff recorded their pride in the school, and understanding of what they are trying to achieve.
- Leaders have devised a detailed policy for teaching calculation, as part of the strategy to improve pupils' learning in mathematics. However, they have yet to check how consistently the policy is being applied and its impact on raising standards.
- The curriculum is well balanced, and includes an effective focus on reading, writing and mathematics, with adequate links across subjects to support the application of these key skills. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark in recognition of this provision. The school makes provision for specialist teaching of music and French, which is of good quality. The 360° Certificate attests to the focus on pupils' e-safety. The International School award recognises the links with other parts of the world. A wide range of extra-curricular provision includes clubs for various sports, art, drama, music (including a choir) and Spanish, and does much to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes effective use of the primary sports funding, for example by making additional provision, including a fitness club, for which there is good uptake. The Healthy Schools award also acknowledges the promotion of pupils' physical well-being.
- The local authority has worked closely with governors to support the formation of the federation. The school improvement adviser has also ensured that leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the nationally produced information on the school's performance.
- The school maintains a rigorous focus on all aspects of safeguarding and child protection, which fully meet statutory requirements. Furthermore, leaders are meticulous in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are well supported.
- The capacity for improvement is demonstrated by the new leadership team's effectiveness in raising pupils' attainment in 2013, and in developing the team of middle leaders. The federated governing body's clear understanding of the school's performance indicates that this important issue, which was identified at the previous inspection, has been successfully addressed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The reformed governing body, following federation, is confident in the capacity of the new leadership, and shares its vision for improvement. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in current provision and in pupils' achievement. They know the implications of nationally produced data on the school's performance, and hence the quality of teaching, and where improvement is required. Governors are clear about the importance of their role in managing the headteacher's performance, and have arranged appropriate professional advice to ensure their effectiveness in this function. They have also assured themselves that staff performance is appropriately linked to salary progression. Governors are well informed about how pupil premium funding is spent, and know that better use of the funding is improving the impact on eligible pupils. As a result of their experience, and the training undertaken, governors have a secure capacity to hold the school to account.

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	126207
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	431899

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hurley
Headteacher	Jan Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
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