

Grove Primary School

Pickersleigh Grove, Malvern, WR14 2LU

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

- Teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that all pupils, including those who need extra help, make consistently good progress. Teachers' expectations are sometimes too low.
- Standards in writing are not as high as they should be. Not enough pupils have made consistently good progress.
- Some pupils' writing is hampered by weak spelling and letter formation.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs make slow progress in some lessons, where work is not pitched at the right level.
- Although the headteacher and senior leaders have done much to improve teaching, this is comparatively recent and it is too soon to see the full impact on pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by the senior leaders, is committed to raising pupils' achievement. Key actions have been put into place to help improve pupils' progress and these are starting to have an impact.
- The headteacher successfully promotes a strong 'family feel' throughout the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 improved markedly this year.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other and their environment.
- The governing body has improved its understanding so that it is better able to challenge the school about its performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and saw all classes in operation. Four of these observations were conducted jointly either with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and also scrutinised a range of work with the deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, and an inspector listened to some of them read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle managers, and in addition, the inspector talked with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions with parents took place at the end of the school day. The inspector also received and considered 15 staff questionnaires. Not enough parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be taken into account.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Townsend

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is above the national average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons with high expectations that accelerate the progress of all groups of learners
 - ensuring that the work set challenges all pupils to make the best possible progress
 - giving lower attaining pupils more practical support to accomplish tasks in lessons
 - adjusting activities for pupils with special educational needs so that they relate more closely to their learning needs.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - creating more opportunities to use and apply writing skills in different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils in all year groups have time to revisit, redraft and improve their writing
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations about the quality of all pupils' handwriting and letter formation
 - developing strategies to improve the teaching of spelling and ensure that this is consistent in all year groups.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are high by developing the skills of leaders at all levels so they can rigorously and accurately check teaching quality and take prompt and effective action to tackle weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below the national average in writing. Progress is too variable across year groups and subjects, and in particular in writing.
- Pupils, including the more able, are not always given work challenging work in lessons to ensure that they make the progress that they are capable of.
- Attainment in 2013 was significantly below the national average in writing at the end of Year 6 and very few pupils reached the higher level. Only three out of every five pupils reached the level expected for their age in writing.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils making expected progress was close to the national figure in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who made better than expected progress was close to the national in reading, above in mathematics but below in writing.
- Pupils' unvalidated results of the recent 2014 tests for Year 6 in reading and mathematics show an improvement on last year. However, these latest results show a dip in the number of pupils who attained the higher levels in mathematics and reading. There is a small improvement this year in writing but the standards in writing at the end of Year 6 are well below average. A third of pupils have not reached the expected level for their age.
- Progress for Year 6 pupils has improved this year. Most pupils have made expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and some pupils have exceeded the progress expected of them.
- The school's own data shows that although some pupils make good progress this is not consistent across the school. Some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of over time. Progress in writing is weakest because pupils are not always given opportunities to practise their writing in other subjects and, in some classes, poor handwriting and spelling hamper pupils' progress.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been well below the national average for a number of years. However, there is rapid improvement this year and pupils have made better progress. Current Year 2 pupils have achieved standards closer to last year's national average.
- Children join Reception with skills and aptitudes below those typical for their age. They make strong progress because they are fully engaged in a wide range of stimulating activities. Children are happy to try out new experiences in Reception because the very positive relationships with staff give them the confidence to explore. Attainment at the end of Reception has improved markedly this year because of improved teaching, and is broadly average.
- Improved and effective teaching of phonics (how the letters in words represent different sounds) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is helping to improve pupils' reading skills. In the recent Year 1 phonics check, an average proportion of pupils reached the expected level, which was an improvement on the previous year.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals had made

progress similar to other pupils. They were about two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing. The gaps between the standards reached by eligible pupils and others across the school vary, and in particular in writing.

- Pupils with special educational needs sometimes make slower than expected progress in lessons, either because the tasks are too hard or they do not have the right support to complete them successfully.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school. Teaching over time has varied too much in quality and this is the reason that not all pupils make consistently good progress, in particular in writing.
- There have been a number of staff changes over recent years. Staffing is now more stable, teaching is improving and there is evidence of more good teaching in school over the past year.
- In writing, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to revisit and edit their work and improve the quality of their writing. Opportunities to write at length in different subjects are not consistent in all year groups. Spelling and handwriting are not taught well enough, so some pupils have weak spelling skills and their writing lacks fluency because they do not form their letters correctly.
- In some classes, the expectations of what pupils are capable of is not always high enough. Some teachers do not plan lessons with high expectations of learning that meets the needs of all learners and extends their knowledge.
- Teaching encourages the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Pupils are positive about their learning especially when they work in pairs. They like asking their partner for their ideas so they can learn from each other.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils say they enjoy learning. In the Reception class, children avidly searched for worms. They talked about words to describe the worms, spontaneously asking questions about factual knowledge. This was then linked to the children's task and pupils enthusiastically used descriptive words in their writing activity.
- The marking of pupils' books has improved and helps pupils to do better. It increasingly shows pupils what they need to do to improve a piece of work. Pupils generally respond to this well and sometimes write notes back to the teacher.
- The learning environment is of a good quality in classrooms, corridors and main areas. Displays are interactive, colourful and highly informative. During lessons, pupils use the classroom environment to support their independence and learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are usually provided with activities that have been modified to help them succeed but these are not always at the right level for each pupil. As a result, pupils make slower progress in these lessons.
- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and keep them interested in learning. Teaching assistants are well-deployed to support the learning and personal development of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school, which is a very welcoming place where pupils feel happy. They value the school ethos. Pupils are prompt in attending lessons, being ready to learn quickly.
- In lessons, behaviour is good and pupils show they have positive attitudes to learning, especially when they find tasks interesting. Pupils are happy to support one another and share their ideas.
- There has been a marked improvement in the reduction of exclusions. Pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour are supported well, ensuring that there is no disruption to lessons.
- Pupils talk sensibly about bullying, understanding what it is and how it can be tackled when it occurs. They value the school's approach, stating any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. One pupil commented, 'We are too big to be a family, but it is like a family because we all look after and help each other.'
- The small number of parents who met with the inspectors felt that behaviour was good and that pupils are successfully supported in improving their behaviour when it is needed.
- The school is committed to ensuring discrimination does not occur. It uses the information from behaviour logs to ensure that any issues are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel and indeed are safe. They understand issues connected to e-safety, valuing the work the school does to prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future.
- Attendance has improved this year and is broadly average. Despite leaders' best efforts a minority of parents continue to allow their children to take time off.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have improved the quality of teaching, but not sufficiently to ensure that all pupils make good progress. As a result, underperformance that resulted from weak teaching in the past has not been completely overcome.
- Subject leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, the actions they have put in place have not had sufficient time to bring about improvements, such as ensuring consistently good teaching, with high expectations of the proportion of pupils who make good and better progress.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have the right priorities for improving the school. However, although improvement plans identify important priorities, but are not always specific enough in linking to pupils' achievement.
- The school has developed clearer roles for leaders at different levels and staff appointments have strengthened the leadership team.
- During the inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher showed that they understand the features of high-quality teaching. They are aware of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching

over time and provide staff with guidance on how to improve. These factors indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further.

- The headteacher is committed to making the school successful. There have been clear improvements in attendance, standards in phonics, the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 2. Teaching is improving. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons more than they used to.
- The headteacher takes appropriate action on teachers' salaries based upon pupils' achievement and gives clear guidance on what a teacher must do in order to progress through the pay scales.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. Recent visits have assisted leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and provided a frank discussion of pupils' achievement. Effective support has been given to the governing body through the monthly meetings to discuss improvements and priority areas. The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Support from a National Leader in Education has been effective in the training and coaching of staff skills to improve teaching and learning.
- A range of experiences enhance and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils' performances and sporting opportunities successfully underpin their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The leader for physical education has ensured that the sports premium is being spent appropriately on additional coaching for pupils and training for teachers. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in new sports, such as lacrosse. More pupils are participating in sport, to the benefit of their health and well-being.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders take appropriate action to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle any form of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and understand its strengths and what it needs to do to improve. The governing body has become more effective in holding the school to account by asking the necessary questions to challenge leaders, including subject leaders. They understand that there is some variation on progress for some groups of pupils. They monitor standards and progress through the use of data, and monthly meetings with the local authority to ensure that achievement rises. Governors have a clear knowledge of school priorities. Some governors undertake visits to the school and produce reports of these. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used to support achievement for this group of pupils, for example through providing extra activities and support in the classroom. Governors have managed the school's finances effectively to ensure that resources are spent wisely and in the best interests of the pupils.

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	135067
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	442582

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hayden
Headteacher	Mark Ridlinton
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2012
Telephone number	01684 572516
Fax number	01684 572516
Email address	office@groveprimary.worcs.sch.uk

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