

Grovelands Primary School

Dunbar Road, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27

Inspection dates

21–22 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have successfully brought about improvements since the previous inspection. They have improved teaching and consequently pupils' achievement has improved.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years. They are taught within a safe and stimulating environment and make good progress in all aspects of their development.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Teaching is brisk and lively and teachers use resources that stimulate pupils' imaginations.
- Pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because they are provided with good support from trained teaching assistants.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and well mannered and they get on well together and with adults. Owing to the high level of care they receive, they feel safe in school.
- The curriculum is well planned with an interesting range of topics that engage pupils' interest. It is enriched with subjects such as art and music that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders are ambitious and have established a skilled team of staff who are motivated and keen to improve.
- Governors are well organised. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They provide a good level of challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers use assessment information to plan work that is challenging enough for the most-able pupils.
- Not all pupils respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Some school leaders do not make enough use of all available information to set ambitious targets for improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - marking and feedback are meaningful to pupils and have an impact on their learning
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- Leaders at all levels set ambitious targets for improvement and hold teachers fully to account for the progress that pupils make.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders acted decisively to tackle previous weaknesses. They harnessed support from the local authority to help them to improve teaching. Consequently, teaching is consistently good with a proportion that is outstanding.
- Most leaders are ambitious and have high expectations for staff and for pupils. They have established a climate that promotes high standards for pupils' academic and personal development. Through their ethos, 'Believe, Create, Achieve', pupils and staff are encouraged to take risks and build confidence in tackling challenges with resilience.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They have comprehensive plans for improvement that have been created in consultation with all staff and governors. Consequently there is a shared vision and ambition for the future of the school.
- Leaders closely check teachers' performance and set targets for improvement. They visit classrooms formally and informally and check work in pupils' books. They provide appropriate training and coaching and this has led to significant improvements to teaching. Teachers understand that they are accountable for the progress pupils make and that only the best teaching is rewarded.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils has improved owing to targeted use of the additional funding known as the pupil premium. Additional teachers have been employed to support disadvantaged pupils in class and this is helping them to learn at similar rates to their classmates. Some funding is used to subsidise class visits and to help with school uniform. Consequently these pupils have the same opportunities as other pupils and this has increased their confidence.
- Leaders have thoughtfully developed the curriculum to take into account the needs and interests of all pupils. Subjects are woven together so that pupils gain a wider perspective of what they are learning. There are ample opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills when learning other subjects, and this has led to gains in both reading and writing.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest that add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Additional activities such as music, dance and drama effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are fostered through the study of topics such as the Vikings, in which pupils learn about democracy, law and respect for others.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities that keep them fit and healthy. Some of the additional sports funding has been used to provide training for staff. This has increased the staff's confidence in providing lessons in dance, gymnastics and games. Consequently, pupils' rates of participation have increased. The school boasts a number of trophies won in inter-schools competitions.
- Parents who responded to the survey and who spoke to inspectors agreed that the school is well led and managed and that the school responds to any concerns parents may have.
- The safety of pupils is given high priority by all staff. The arrangements to protect pupils are robust because staff are vigilant in spotting signs that pupils may be struggling or at risk from harm.
- Leaders have developed a new system to record and track pupils' learning and progress. However, not all leaders confidently use this information to target specific groups of pupils. Consequently, the targets that some leaders set for pupils, particularly those who are the most able, are not always as challenging as they should be. This is why leadership is not outstanding.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors responded positively to a recent review of their work. They reviewed the structure of their committees and are well organised and support school leaders efficiently. They use performance information to challenge school leaders and hold them to account. They know what leaders are doing to improve teaching and that only the best teaching is rewarded financially. Governors visit school regularly so they see for themselves how well the school runs on a day-to-day basis. Many governors are linked with subject leaders and, as such, will check for themselves that what leaders say is accurate.
 - Governors ensure that all resources, including finance and staffing, are managed well. They check carefully that additional funds are spent wisely and that the budget provides good value for money.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved and is consistently good across the school. Most teachers have high expectations and they have a clear view of what they want pupils to learn. Pupils respond to these high expectations by working hard in lessons. Pupils persevere when tasks are challenging and show resilience in tackling new learning.
- In most classes teaching is lively and engaging, and consequently pupils enjoy learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and this gives pupils the confidence to try their best. Most teachers ask pupils questions and follow up answers by probing pupils to think more deeply. This adds to the pace of learning and increases pupils' rates of progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good-quality support to teachers and pupils. They are well trained and work with individual pupils as well as groups of pupils who need extra help. Consequently, all pupils progress at similar rates, demonstrating that they have equal opportunities to succeed.
- In most classes, teachers are skilled at observing pupils and listening to what they have to say. This gives teachers a clear overview of how well pupils understand what they are learning. Where necessary, teachers intervene by adapting the activity to meet the needs of pupils and so pupils progress well.
- Literacy permeates all aspects of the school's curriculum and consequently pupils make good progress in reading and writing. Teachers use books such as *How to train your dragon* by Cressida Cowell to stimulate the interest of both boys and girls alike and inspire them to write. In a Year 6 class, pupils wrote eulogies in response to the supposed death of one of the characters. Owing to the way in which it was taught, this lesson contributed very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy learning mathematics. This is because their work is often challenging and requires them to work hard. They confidently manipulate numbers when carrying out calculations to solve complicated word problems. In Year 5, pupils made good progress in extending their knowledge of shape because the teacher introduced more complex vocabulary such as perpendicular, parallel, and reflective symmetry. This helped pupils to refine their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes.
- Most teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of their subject and use this effectively to explain clearly so that pupils understand what they are learning. Work is usually at the right level for pupils, although at times work is not always hard enough for the most-able pupils. This is why teaching is not outstanding.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, not all teachers consistently ensure that pupils carry out the corrections needed and this slows progress for a very few pupils. A very few teachers do not provide clear feedback to pupils and so it has a reduced impact on pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are happy and they enjoy school, and this is reflected in their attendance that has improved and is now above average.
- The school provides a safe, stimulating environment both inside and outdoors. It is very well equipped and provides attractive classrooms as well as 'break out' spaces where pupils can learn in groups or work independently.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that adults are always on hand to respond to any concerns they have. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including that related to modern technology but are adamant that it rarely occurs.
- Pupils are very aware of the need to keep healthy and they enjoy the nutritious lunches at school. They appreciate the various physical activities available at lunchtimes and after school that keep them fit and healthy.
- The school promotes safe practices through the curriculum. Pupils learn to stay safe from external risks such as those related to roads and water. They know that tobacco and some non-medicinal drugs can be dangerous and that personal information should not be shared when using computers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards staff and their lessons. They get on very well together, regardless of their backgrounds. They say that they are treated fairly and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Despite the large number of pupils in school, pupils move safely and sensibly around the building. They are polite, courteous and kind to each other. At breaktimes, older pupils help younger ones and enjoy the responsibilities such as checking that pupils move safely from the playground to classrooms.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions and know the school's systems to manage their behaviour. This is because all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently, so pupils respond to teachers' high expectations.
- The playground is well supervised and there are a good range of activities to keep pupils busy. They play well together, demonstrating good social and moral development. School records show very few reported incidents relating to poor behaviour, and the number of exclusions is low.
- The large majority of parents agreed that their children are happy and safe in school and that they behave well. Staff and governors strongly agree that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Although most lessons capture pupils' interest, there are a few occasions when the pace slows or when pupils do not know what to do. On these occasions, a few pupils start to chat among themselves or distract other pupils, which is why behaviour is not outstanding.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is because they work hard and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been a legacy of underachievement that school leaders quickly addressed. Consequently, published performance information for previous cohorts presents a weaker picture of progress than that found on inspection.
- Work in pupils' books and on display around the school shows that pupils also make good progress in subjects other than mathematics and English. They build historical and geographical skills systematically and they make good progress in physical education. The quality of artwork on display is good. Pupils in Year 6 produced some striking self portraits based on the style of Picasso.
- Owing to actions taken by school leaders, pupils' achievement in writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are provided with stimulating topics that spark their imagination and inspire them to write. They mostly write clearly and legibly and use interesting vocabulary to express their ideas. Previous gaps between girls' and boys' achievement have closed and boys now do as well as girls.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They learn letters and sounds (phonics) to help them to read unfamiliar words and this helps most of them to progress well. Just occasionally, reading books selected for pupils in Year 2 are too easy and this slows their progress. By Year 6, pupils read fluently and confidently and with good expression. This is in part due to the interesting choice of books selected by teachers to introduce class topics.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in mathematics. Pupils develop fluency and mastery of numbers that they use to solve complicated written problems. In Year 6, they use their knowledge of negative numbers to draw co-ordinates in four quadrants. However, there are times when pupils of different abilities have to complete the same work and this slows progress for the most-able pupils.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved. Staff are now more effective in identifying the specific needs of these pupils and providing the right support to help them to progress as well as their classmates. Sometimes, trained teaching assistants help them in class while at other times these pupils are given tailored programmes of work that help them to overcome their difficulties.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress at similar rates to other pupils. Previous gaps in their attainment have closed owing to more effective systems to check their progress. They are provided with additional help from skilled teaching assistants and this builds their confidence and helps them to progress well from their starting points.
- Although most teachers plan work that is at the right level for pupils, there are times when the most-able pupils do not have hard enough work and they do not all reach the highest standards that they should. This is because not all teachers use assessment information well enough to provide work that is challenging for these pupils.

Early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are warmly welcomed into a safe, stimulating environment where they feel safe and they learn well. Classrooms and the outdoor area are well equipped with a good range of quality resources that help children to learn and develop. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is above average and so they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of children and they plan activities that are well matched to pupils' level of development. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that are led by teachers.
- Teaching is lively and engaging and very well paced. For example, in a mathematics lesson, children made good progress because the teacher kept them on their toes by counting forwards and backwards from different numbers and they had to listen carefully to be able to carry out the different commands.
- Children behave exceptionally well. They have quickly learned classroom routines and they respond to teachers' questions and instructions because they do not want to miss anything. They feel safe because staff are sensitive and caring towards their needs. Children concentrate well and enjoy learning.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The leader has a good understanding of what works well and what needs to be further improved. She has brought about significant improvements to children's achievement in recent years and is well placed to continue to improve.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 114393 |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10006377 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 628 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Richard Miller |
| Headteacher | Julie Claxton |
| Telephone number | 01323 840062 |
| Website | www.grovelands-school.co.uk |
| Email address | office@grovelands.e-sussex.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 July 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than usual. This is additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is much lower than average.
- There is provision for children in the early years in three Reception classes. Most children attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been significant changes to the teaching team since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, 12 of which were jointly observed with school leaders. They looked at work in pupils' books and they listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6. Inspectors attended an assembly and they observed pupils as they moved around the school.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school improvement plans, minutes from governors' meetings, records relating to teachers' performance and pupils' assessment information.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, teachers and learning support staff, groups of pupils and an adviser from the local authority. Inspectors also met with three governors, including the Chair.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 108 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents during the inspection. The opinions of staff were considered by analysing the 33 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

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| Joy Considine, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Martin Garrett | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rosemary Keen | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Worgan | Ofsted Inspector |

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