

Grangewood School

Fore Street, Eastcote, Pinner HA5 2JQ

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders, including the academy trust, have not done enough to maintain the school's outstanding overall effectiveness.
- Recent turbulence caused by changes in leadership and some staff absence has contributed to the school's decline.
- The quality of teaching varies too widely. Teachers' planning does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress.
- In the early years, staff do not make full use of the resources and space available to help pupils learn or to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Many support staff do not know what they need to do during lessons to help pupils learn.
- Too few staff feel fully supported by leaders when dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Effective strategies used to manage behaviour are not shared widely among staff.
- Curriculum plans and assessment procedures are new and are not firmly established.
- Leaders acknowledge the recent decline but their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous.
- The role of the local advisory board, and how it operates alongside the trust board, is unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a friendly, safe place to be.
- Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, cultural and spiritual education, is good.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their positive attitudes and regular attendance.
- Pupils receive a range of therapies that prepare them well for learning.
- The school's work to forge links with and support the families of pupils is exceptional.
- The trust has recently increased its challenge and support for leaders. This is aiding improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - providing further guidance for all staff, particularly those in the early years and key stage 1, to enable them to make full use of resources and the indoor and outdoor spaces available for learning
 - providing all support staff with good-quality training to increase their understanding of what they should be doing during lessons to help pupils learn
 - sharing good practice, particularly the strategies used to manage pupils who display the most challenging behaviour.
- Raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that the recently introduced curriculum and assessment procedures become firmly established and illustrate clearly how well all pupils are doing
 - using the information gained from regular assessments to plan learning that pupils can do, which also provides enough challenge for the most able pupils
 - implementing programmes for the most able pupils that promote their basic understanding of letters and sounds and their use of number.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - thoroughly evaluating the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work and ensuring that areas requiring improvement are suitably prioritised in the school's development plans
 - monitoring routinely and systematically the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on pupils' learning and progress in all key stages
 - using this information to further inform staff training and also to further inform action when standards regularly fall below the expectations of leaders
 - building staff morale by demonstrating that staff have the full support of leaders
 - clarifying the duties of the local advisory board and the trust board so that all those involved in the governance of the school contribute fully to its improvement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has undergone significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. There have been two changes in the role of head of school. The principal took up a new role within the trust. A new executive headteacher was appointed in 2018. A newly appointed head of school will join the school in September 2018.
- Some significant staff absences have added to this period of turbulence. During this time, not enough attention has been paid to maintaining the school's effectiveness. Ofsted's questionnaire for staff showed that a small minority of those who responded during the inspection did not feel that the school is well led and managed.
- Staffing changes and an over-reliance on temporary staff have weakened the quality of teaching and the support provided for pupils. Responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff show that, currently, morale is low.
- Leaders recognise that the school's overall effectiveness has declined. They feel it remains good. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Significant improvements have been made but there are weaknesses in teaching that have not been ironed out fully through systematic monitoring and subsequent action to improve it. This limits the progress made by pupils.
- Until recently, senior leaders have not been used effectively to secure long-term improvements. They have been involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Taking on too much responsibility has limited their time to monitor and evaluate the school's work. They are demonstrating a clearer understanding of their roles in raising achievement and are leading improvement.
- Similarly, until recently, middle leaders have been underused. They have not been fully involved in overseeing pupils' welfare, monitoring pupils' progress or sharing their skills with others to gain greater consistency in managing teaching. This has changed. They are now expected to monitor pupils' progress and welfare and use this information to guide improvements.
- Leaders at all levels are responding to these weaknesses and are securing improvement. They are demonstrating that they have the capacity to improve the school. Recent changes to the curriculum and assessment procedures have strengthened provision. These changes are providing staff with a much clearer overview of how well pupils are doing in their personal and academic progress.
- Links between what is taught and how this is assessed are clear. Personalised targets, based on the needs identified in each pupil's education, health and care plan, are monitored termly. These procedures are not fully established. Currently, not all staff are using the information gained from assessments to fully inform their planning of teaching and learning.
- Only a very small number of free texts were received from parents and carers during the inspection. Most were supportive of the school's work.

Governance of the school

- In the past, leaders have not been held fully accountable by the trust for securing improvement. Recently, this has improved. An executive headteacher now oversees the school's work and provides much-needed support and challenge to secure improvement. The trust has other proven leaders to aid the school's improvement. They are professional and committed and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience into the school.
- The role of the local advisory board (LAB), and how it operates alongside the trust board, is unclear. School leaders feel that the LAB is 'finding its way' in determining how it can support fully the school's improvement.
- The trust feels that the LAB is not charged with making important decisions. Inspectors' scrutiny of the minutes of recent LAB meetings shows that they are fully involved in the work of the school. The lack of clarity over this matter does not reflect well on the overall governance of the school.
- Inspectors' discussions with senior leaders confirmed that, generally, external funding for disadvantaged pupils and for physical education (PE) and sport is used effectively. However, they are unaware of how the impact of this funding is monitored routinely by those responsible for the school's governance.
- The trust demonstrates a clear strategic vision for the school. Plans are under way to relocate the school temporarily as a new school is built on the school site. The school's leadership has been reorganised to ensure that, during this interim period, leaders can maintain its current trend of improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- During the first day of the inspection, serious shortfalls were identified in the arrangements to safeguard pupils. Not all checks have been made or recorded when recruiting adults to work with children. Checks were not carried out to show that members of the LAB were suitable.
- During the inspection, leaders were given time to resolve these weaknesses. By the second day, they had confirmed with inspectors that all necessary checks and precautions were in place. The single central record and staff training are complete and up to date.
- Procedures to protect children at risk of harm are secure. Incidents are followed up appropriately with local safeguarding agencies.
- Recent changes made to maintaining records of these matters online enable staff to raise concerns quickly and gain a prompt response from leaders. These procedures are robust. Leaders acknowledge that they need to transfer all existing records of pupils currently highlighted as a concern onto this system to ensure their safety.
- Access to the school site is secure. Arrival and departure by minibus and private transport are suitably managed to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies widely. Leaders know where most of the strengths and weaknesses lie but it is unclear what actions are taken when weaknesses are identified.
- Across all key stages, teachers do not deploy support staff effectively to ensure that they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Support assistants are very caring and oversee pupils' safety and personal needs well. They are unsure about what they should be doing in lessons. They often end up sitting alongside pupils in groups listening to the teacher or waiting for the teacher to interact with the pupil they are looking after. Some of them are unclear about how to support the work of specialist therapists because they have not had enough recent training.
- Learning is not always planned to suit the different abilities of pupils. At times, the most able pupils in key stage 1 are given simple tasks to do that do not fully challenge them. Staff do not spend enough time developing pupils' understanding of letters and sounds or their use of basic counting skills. This limits their progress.
- Some tasks are too difficult for most pupils. For example, pupils in key stage 2 were asked to count how many frogs were left on the log shown on the interactive whiteboard. They had a handout with pictures of frogs on it but, for most pupils, this was simply a sensory item rather than a learning aid. This led to pupils learning very little.
- Parts of the school are untidy and not well cared for.
- Systematic procedures have been introduced to assess how well pupils are progressing. These procedures link seamlessly with good-quality curriculum plans that inform 'my learning journey' and with the therapies and personalised targets set for each pupil. Increasingly, teachers, support assistants and therapeutic staff work collectively to plan and assess pupils' learning and progress. These procedures are not firmly established. Leaders acknowledge that more time and further training are needed to ensure that all staff are confident in using them.
- Teachers are expert in capturing pupils' attention and engaging with them. They use stories, rhymes, bubbles, parachutes, songs and musical instruments to bring learning to life. Signing, expressive language and regular use of key words are used well to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills and aid their communication and understanding. Routines are reinforced well. Key words and visual aids are used effectively to help pupils make choices about their drinks and snacks at breaktimes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are provided with good care and support. Parents who shared their views during the inspection praised the 'amazing staff' and the 'excellent care, love and affection shown for pupils from the moment they arrive in school each day'.
- The school's 'Ten Golden Rules' underpin much of its work and add significantly to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Posters around school remind staff and parents of the values of respect and dignity, building confidence and enabling pupils to share their views and express their feelings.

- Regular assemblies are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils winning the 'star of the month award' enjoy having their photograph and achievements posted on the school noticeboard.
- The PE and sport funding is used effectively to provide additional coaching in a range of sports tailored to pupils' physical and cognitive needs. A wide range of enrichment activities, including sensory days, music and cultural events, and a residential 'sleepover' add significantly to their wider understanding and their enjoyment of school.
- Pupils are proud to be part of the school council. In school council meetings, staff are adept at enabling pupils to communicate their views and make choices. For example, pupils selected the activities and food and drinks served at the summer tea party planned for later this term.
- Teachers, support staff and multi-professional teams work together to ensure that the educational and therapeutic needs of each pupil are met. Providing for the personal needs of each child, and ensuring that they are happy in school, is central to the day-to-day work of staff.
- Links forged between the school and pupils' homes are exceptional. The family services team works closely with families, helping them to understand the school's work, resolving transport issues and bridging communication between parents and other support services. They help families to identify charities and other organisations that can support their children and their siblings. Established links fostered with other organisations ensure that children and their families are supported during the school holidays.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire during the inspection raised concerns about behaviour. Not all of them feel that it is managed consistently. Only half of them agreed that behaviour is good. Significantly, they feel that leaders do not support them well enough when dealing with serious behavioural issues.
- Not all teachers use the agreed strategies to manage challenging behaviour. Good examples were seen of teachers using signing and picture cards to show pupils that learning activities had ended and that it was time to change activity. However, some staff spend too much time reasoning or appealing with pupils. This wastes time and, at times, disrupts the learning of others.
- Pupils told inspectors that the school is a calm, friendly and safe place to be. Generally, pupils socialise and play together well. Relations between pupils and staff are good.
- Most pupils attend well. Their attendance is closely monitored. Effective links with parents have led to a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until recently, procedures to monitor pupils' progress have not captured an accurate overview of how well they are doing over time. Leaders have recognised this weakness. More robust procedures are now in place. At this stage, leaders do not yet have information about pupils' progress over a full year. They do not have sufficient information to spot trends and patterns in outcomes for pupils or to fully inform provision.
- The latest assessment information shows that, currently, the large majority of pupils in all key stages are making at least good progress. Observations of pupils at work in lessons do not support this view. The variable quality of teaching pupils regularly receive does not enable them to make good progress. This is partly supported by the school's own assessment information.
- Effective use is made of additional funding to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as others do. Funding provides electronic devices to improve pupils' communication, boost their confidence and give them greater independence. Additional therapies purchased to promote creativity have also contributed to the progress and welfare of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's specialist nature and the expertise of staff mean that pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support to help them make progress. Most pupils have regular speech and language therapy and personalised support provided in small groups to help them communicate.
- All pupils make significant gains in their personal development, particularly in their communication skills and their social, emotional and physical development. They learn quickly how to follow instructions, develop routines, forge friendships, interact with others and make their own choices. These small but vital gains are recorded systematically in their personal diaries to take home and share with their parents.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Early years provision includes a small Nursery and Reception class, and a Reception and Year 1 class.
- Weaknesses in teaching evident in the main school also affect the quality of children's learning and progress in the early years. Support assistants are not always used well enough to lead learning or complement the work of teachers. At times, they are used simply to control behaviour.
- Time spent working alongside individual children to help them learn is not sustained. Children often lose interest and regularly move to another piece of equipment, which results in superficial learning.
- Teachers use national guidance, a commercial package and information contained in each child's education, health and care plan to plan learning for them. Links between what children are expected to learn in and out of the classroom are unclear. Opportunities to reinforce learning inside and outdoors are often missed. For the most able children, basic language skills, mark-making and use of number are underdeveloped. Opportunities to reinforce basic routines are not always taken.
- The school's assessment information shows that, currently, most children are making good progress and a high proportion are exceeding this. This is not supported by

inspection findings. Teaching is too inconsistent, so pupils make steady, rather than rapid, improvement.

- Where teaching is effective, children thrive. Knowledgeable and experienced teachers show endless patience and skill to get children to engage with them. They use song, signing and facial expression well to capture and retain children's attention. Practical hands-on activities make learning fun. Children are shown how to make choices for themselves, take turns, share resources and recognise each other's names. Behaviour is managed consistently. This good practice has not been widely shared.
- Children are kept safe. Strong relations between staff and children are forged quickly.
- Leadership of the early years setting requires improvement. A newly appointed leader will take responsibility for the early years next term. Parts of the Nursery and Reception classes are not vibrant, stimulating environments in which to learn.

School details

Unique reference number	138157
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10031908

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Barry Nolan
Interim Head of school	Hilary McDermott
Telephone number	01895 676 401
Website	www.grangewoodschool.co.uk
Email address	hilary.mcdermott@theedenacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2014

Information about this school

- Grangewood is an average-sized special school for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. All pupils have speech and language difficulties. A significant proportion of them have autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support by the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The school converted to an academy in 2012. It is a member of the Eden Academy Trust. It works with other special schools within the trust. A team of therapists is employed by the school to meet pupils' physical and medical needs.
- An interim head of school currently leads the school until a newly appointed head of

school takes over next term.

- Plans are in place to relocate the school on a temporary basis. Construction of a new, all-through free school is planned for the school site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out short visits to classes with senior leaders to observe the pupils learning. They also walked the school to gain an overview of its ethos and how effectively it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- They observed pupils' arrival and departure from school, and pupils at play during breaks and lunchtimes. Inspectors took the opportunity to chat informally about the school with parents.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and managers, including the executive headteacher, three members of the Eden Academy Trust board and the school council.
- Inspectors looked at important documents, including safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the local advisory board and the trust board, records of behaviour and attendance and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors considered a letter and six free-text responses from parents and 18 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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