

Grove Primary School

Caledonia Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV2 1HZ

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, well supported by the leadership team, has improved the school considerably since it became an academy in 2016. Improvement is evident in all areas, including behaviour, teaching and outcomes.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides good levels of support to school leaders and staff. However, there are some weaknesses in the communication and information shared between trust members, directors and governors.
- Leaders have identified appropriate priorities and generated individual action plans to raise achievement. Currently, these plans are not evaluated systematically across the MAT. Leaders, including directors, are therefore unclear whether actions taken are leading to continual improvement.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers use their accurate assessments to plan activities that build well on pupils' prior learning.
- Minor weaknesses remain in teaching. Boys do not make as much progress as girls in reading because they are not always as motivated or engaged by reading activities. In addition, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write independently or at length in different subjects.
- Pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are in the early stages of development. As a result, too few reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are courteous and polite. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best.
- Relationships are highly positive throughout the school. Pupils trust their teachers and other adults. As a result, they feel safe.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from the range of curriculum opportunities they receive. Skilfully taught Spanish, computing and music lessons supplement the curriculum well during teachers' release time.
- Pupils are making good progress. Attainment is rising rapidly across the school, especially in early years and from Years 1 to 4. Stronger teaching is leading to improvement in Years 5 and 6.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. Effective teaching and leadership ensure that children make good progress.
- Good-quality pastoral support is provided for pupils and their families.
- Pupils do not have a secure understanding of British values.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that outcomes continue to rise, especially in Years 5 and 6, by ensuring that teachers:
 - improve boys' motivation and engagement in reading activities, so that they achieve as well as the girls
 - provide opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length in a range of subjects
 - develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills, so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - improving communication and information sharing within the MAT structure
 - setting out clear school improvement plans, with measurable actions and dates, which leaders evaluate systematically to determine impact.
- Ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of British values and of how these influence their daily lives.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has led school improvement effectively since he took up his post two years ago. With the good support of St Martin's MAT, he has created a secure, caring environment in which pupils are keen to learn. Academic standards, which have been historically low, have risen substantially and are moving closer towards the national average. Pupils are making good progress across the school.
- The headteacher and leadership team carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching. They provide sharp and incisive feedback to help teachers improve their practice. The headteacher is not afraid to take action when teaching is not good enough. All inadequate and weak teaching has been addressed. Valuable training and support are provided for newly qualified teachers to ensure that they quickly gain the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Assistant headteachers make a good contribution to the leadership of the school. They are actively involved in supporting and improving the quality of teaching. They lead training and have introduced new initiatives and schemes to provide greater structure and support for both teachers and pupils, especially in reading and mathematics. For example, new reading materials and intervention programmes help pupils who are falling behind to catch up. This is leading to higher attainment and better progress for all pupils.
- Senior leaders have generated action plans for reading, writing, mathematics and early years. While these plans centre on some of the main school priorities, the criteria against which success will be judged are too vague and the plans do not state when actions will be completed. Additionally, these plans are not reviewed or evaluated well enough by leaders, including MAT directors, to find out whether actions taken are leading to improvement.
- Leaders ensure that they check pupils' progress thoroughly. They use information gathered to identify pupils who are falling behind and who need additional support. The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The leader has a clear overview of pupils and their progress. Appropriate support is coordinated well and is carefully monitored.
- The pupil premium funding and that received for pupils with SEND are used effectively. Additional staff are employed to help support individuals or groups in the classroom. Pupils access intervention programmes to improve their progress and close gaps in their learning. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that these pupils make good progress. Pupils are fully integrated into school life. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Funding to develop the teaching of physical education (PE) and sport is used well. Leaders use the money to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in this subject. A sports teacher is employed to work alongside staff and coach them. As a result, staff confidence and expertise have improved. After-school clubs and a wide range of sports activities contribute to pupils' physical fitness and well-being.

- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils learn different skills and knowledge through a range of topics. Pupils find these topics, for example 'Superheroes of Medicine' and 'Bright Lights, Big City', interesting. Spanish, music and computing are particularly well taught in key stage 2 through the school's 'Junior Jam sessions'. These lessons are taught by subject specialists during teacher's planning and preparation time. Clubs, visits and visitors also contribute successfully to pupils' enjoyment of school and enrich the curriculum well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. From the outset, children in early years are taught the importance of rules and the need to treat everyone with respect and kindness. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures and show a high level of tolerance and respect for those from different backgrounds. This is because the school is set within a very diverse, multicultural area and leaders ensure that discrimination of any type is not tolerated. As a result, pupils play and learn together in a harmonious community.
- Parents and carers have positive views of the school. They are very pleased with the school and say that their children are happy and safe.
- Pupils are not secure in their knowledge and understanding of British values in relation to democracy or individual liberty. Pupils are unable to say what these values mean or how they affect their daily lives as members of the school and wider community. For example, pupils have limited opportunities to vote for school representatives or to present their views on different topics.

Governance of the school

- The MAT provides good levels of support for school leaders and staff. Regular meetings are held between the chief executive officer and the headteacher and there are high levels of accountability. Teachers work in close collaboration with the other schools in the trust to receive training and check that assessments of pupils' work are accurate.
- MAT leaders have a good knowledge of the challenges faced by the school. They receive regular information from the headteacher about pupils' outcomes and have a good understanding of data. Finances are carefully checked. Governors are involved in school safeguarding training.
- Communication and information sharing between the different tiers of leadership within the trust are not effective. For example, some governors are not clear what the school's priorities are and do not have an accurate view of where teaching is strong or weaker. MAT leaders feel this is reported in various reports or minutes of meetings. However, these documents were not made available during the inspection and leaders were unable to locate this information during discussions.
- Directors and governors lack knowledge about the strategic direction of the school. This is because there is no central school improvement plan for this year. Previous plans have not been evaluated and consequently, directors and governors are not aware whether actions taken are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils are rigorous. Pastoral staff are committed to providing good-quality support. Good links with parents, carers and support agencies enable leaders to access help where needed.
- MAT leaders exercise appropriate oversight of school systems and the safeguarding team is held accountable. Staff have a good knowledge of policies and procedures and know what action to take if children are at risk of harm. This is because effective training is provided and clear and detailed guidance issued.
- Leaders carry out appropriate checks when appointing staff. Records of concern about individual pupils are maintained carefully and leaders follow up any concerns with external agencies to ensure that action is taken when needed.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Helpful assemblies, visitors to school and school activities are all used to teach pupils about potential dangers and how to avoid them. Pupils understand the importance of keeping adults informed of their whereabouts. Workshops ensure that parents are also well informed about pupil safety. The good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel confident to talk to adults if they are worried about anything.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, leaders and teachers have established a very positive learning culture. Relationships in all classes are strong between adults and pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan imaginative tasks and activities that meet the needs of pupils with different abilities.
- Teaching for the most able pupils is good. Good levels of challenge are provided that move pupils on in their learning. Support staff often work with these pupils in lessons and work is set at a higher level, especially in mathematics. The most able pupils who read with inspectors had a detailed knowledge of the books they were reading. They were proficient in their reading and used good expression to convey meaning.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are met well through a carefully designed combination of work in class and additional interventions. Work is matched closely to pupils' individual needs. Working with a partner or within a small group is a successful strategy used to build pupils' confidence and develop their resilience.
- Some pupils speak English as an additional language while other pupils have poor oral skills. Teachers model language well to help improve these pupils' speaking skills. They introduce specific and appropriate subject vocabulary well to extend pupils' abilities in speaking and writing. For example, pupils were reminded that adding 'ed' to the end of a word was a suffix. Pupils were then encouraged to apply suffixes to verbs used in their writing. Inappropriate use of language is challenged and corrected. For example, the 'big, shiny sky' was not accepted as a suitable or sophisticated enough description for pupils in Year 2.

- The effective teaching of phonics means that younger pupils develop a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they represent. Pupils use their skills to decode words when they are reading and to spell unfamiliar words in their writing.
- Leaders have invested heavily in new reading resources and have introduced a new structured scheme. Teachers use these resources well. Books are well matched to pupils' abilities and reading intervention programmes are having a positive impact on improving reading standards. Older pupils can talk about their favourite authors and many read regularly at home with their parents. However, on occasion, staff do not motivate and engage boys fully in reading activities. Boys respond less to adults' questions and disengage. This limits their progress. Overall, boys do not achieve as well as girls in reading at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' handwriting is neat and most of their writing is well presented. Well-planned, imaginative activities, such as dressing up as superheroes to write about different characters, successfully stimulate pupils' thinking. Pupils write for a range of purposes and in different styles. They review their own work and that of their peers to determine how it can be improved. However, pupils have too few opportunities to write independently or at length to develop their writing ability and stamina in other subjects such as science, religious education and topic work.
- Teachers model mathematics well to show pupils how to set out their work. Pupils practise mental mathematics and use of the four-number operations regularly and most demonstrate secure knowledge. However, pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills are less well developed. This restricts their ability to reach the higher standards in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's culture promotes pupils' welfare effectively. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well.
- The pastoral team provides high levels of nurture and support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Good links exist and regular contact is made. Members of staff are supportive and caring. As a result, pupils gain confidence and feel supported.
- 'Star of the week' assemblies recognise pupils' achievements and add to their self-esteem and pride. Messages sent to parents through the 'Marvellous Me' app also ensure that parents are kept informed about their child's accomplishments and maintain positive relationships between school staff and parents.
- Pupils know that bullying involves repeated aggression and understand what cyber bullying is. School activities, theatre groups, assemblies and visiting speakers reinforce key messages. These add to pupils' awareness. Pupils are clear that they would report bullying if it occurred. However, they are adamant that this is not an issue in their school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities offered through clubs and PE lessons. Pupils understand the

importance of a healthy diet and the need to eat everything 'in moderation'. Pupils can describe the contribution carbohydrates, protein and dairy products make to their diets.

- Pupils enjoy and readily take on additional responsibilities in school. For example, pupils act as play leaders and 'digital ambassadors' to help others with their social and computing skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make a valuable contribution to interpreting information for parents and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. They act highly responsibly in their roles as 'young interpreters'.
- Breakfast club is valuable resource for parents and an enjoyable opportunity for pupils to socialise with different age groups. Those that attend make healthy food choices, which prepare them well for the day ahead. Pupils are carefully supervised.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are attentive in lessons and assemblies. They are polite and respectful to adults and visitors. Pupils know and follow the behaviour policy. They report that any conflicts that arise are quickly resolved.
- Pupils provide good levels of support to others. Dressed in purple sweatshirts, 'purple people' are on hand to act as peer mediators if issues escalate. Pupils and their parents agree that behaviour is typically good.
- Leaders monitor behaviour carefully. A new recording system has been introduced. This tracks types and numbers of incidents and allows leaders to detect trends and patterns. Although the number of recorded incidents increased last year, this was because leaders took a firm stance on implementing the school's behaviour policy and ensured that all confrontations were recorded meticulously.
- Pupils play happily together and look after each other well. They are respectful and tolerant of other's beliefs and backgrounds.
- Pupils enjoy school and as a result, they are punctual and attend regularly. Attendance of all groups is line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- A significant number of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual entry time. This has a direct impact on the school's published results because some pupils have only been in the school a short time. Also, in the past, teachers' assessments were not accurate. This has made it difficult for current leaders to show that pupils in key stage 2 have made good progress. However, current assessments are accurate and the school's information, together with pupils' work, show that pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The work in pupils' books demonstrates that all groups of pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics due to effective teaching. However, pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in mathematics because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently or at length in other subjects. Also, pupils'

problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are at the early stages of development. Consequently, too few pupils reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.

- Attainment is rising across the school and is moving closer to the national average. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at key stage 1 in all subjects was in line with the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Most pupils in Years 1 to 4 are working at age-related expectations. There are fewer working at the required standard in Years 5 and 6. This is because of the legacy of weak teaching and consequent gaps in pupils' knowledge. They are now making better progress because of good teaching.
- Reading resources and intervention programmes are having a positive impact on pupils' reading progress, especially for lower ability pupils and those with SEND. However, boys still do not make as much progress as girls, especially in key stage 2, as they are not motivated and do not engage well in reading activities.
- Phonics is taught well from the outset. Pupils demonstrate strong decoding and blending skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read with fluency and expression. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved over the last two years. It is now in line with the national average.
- There is a larger than average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language in the school. Most pupils speak English fluently and can converse easily. Interpreters and additional support are provided for the small number who are still at the early stages of learning the language. This ensures that these pupils achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress. This is because they benefit from individual support and tailored intervention programmes. Pupils are assessed at the start and finish of these programmes. Results show that they make considerable gains in their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. Her knowledgeable approach is underpinned by regular monitoring and working alongside the teachers. Good support is provided to those who are newly qualified to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to promote good learning.
- A large proportion of children join the school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language. Carefully planned activities, with lots of adult modelling and skilled questioning, ensure that children quickly develop their speaking and listening skills. During the inspection, most children in Nursery were able to answer questions and converse with other children. Effective use of storytime also helps develop children's listening and comprehension skills.
- Children make good progress from their starting points because of good-quality teaching. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen significantly over three years from 49% to 66%. It is now close to the national average. However, boys do not achieve as well as girls in literacy, as they spend less time on reading and writing activities and more time outdoors or playing with

construction toys.

- Staff carry out regular assessments of children's learning. They use the information gathered to plan activities that build carefully on children's early abilities. 'Learning journeys' contain a good range of photographic evidence and observations by adults about what children can and cannot do. This informs their early assessments of children's starting points and their abilities.
- Children in early years benefit from a rich, stimulating environment and from a well-planned curriculum. Effective use is made of both the indoor and outdoor environment to develop all areas of learning. Staff have high expectations and ensure that children play, explore and think critically to develop their learning.
- Children behave well in the Reception classes, but some children in Nursery are still developing their social and emotional skills. A small number are not yet able to take turns, share equipment or play amicably with others. Staff strongly promote good manners. Children in Reception were all expected to say 'thank you' for their fruit at snack time and all did. Excellent relationships exist between staff and children. This ensures that children feel safe.
- Effective induction processes are in place. Members of the pastoral team visit homes before children join school. This allows effective working relationships to be established from the outset. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's education through workshops and regular communication. Children settle quickly and adapt well to routines. 'Tidy up time' encourages children to be responsible for equipment and develop their independence.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and all of the statutory requirements for the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	142680
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10053528

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Daniel Lee
Headteacher	Ben Davis
Telephone number	01902 925702
Website	www.groveprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	office@groveprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is one of three primary schools in St Martin's multi-academy trust. The school joined the trust in April 2016.
- The headteacher was appointed in November 2016.
- There is a higher than average level of pupil mobility within the school with pupils leaving or joining throughout the year in most year groups.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Only 9% are White British.
- Three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The school manages a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They visited all classes and saw 27 parts of lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or assistant headteachers. Observations of intervention groups and breakfast club were also carried out.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and three members of the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Parent View and comments made by parents as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were collected by talking to pupils both formally and informally during the school day. Inspectors also considered the school's own survey responses from parents. Staff views were considered through 19 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- A number of documents were reviewed, including the school's own self-evaluation, subject leaders' plans, data on current achievement, reports commissioned by the academy trust about the school, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Pearce	Ofsted Inspector

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