

Grove Primary School

Framfield Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8RQ

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Good-quality practice in some areas of the school is not yet matched in some year groups. This is, in part, due to the high turnover of staff.
- Leadership in the early years has not been sufficiently focused on assessment, the identification of children's progress and understanding the next steps for learning. Consequently, teaching is not good, and children do not make strong progress.
- Not all pupils make good progress with their learning. This is because assessment is not accurate and curriculum planning is not sufficiently challenging.
- Phonics teaching is not secure. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has decreased over a three-year period.
- Teachers do not share a common expectation for behaviour in lessons. In some classrooms learning time is lost when pupils do not engage with set tasks.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development. Systems for planning and monitoring are not established in curriculum areas other than English and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and senior leadership team share high expectations and a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning. They lead with drive and rigour. They are ambitious for the school to provide a good quality of education.
- Teaching and learning are improving steadily, leading to pupils' better overall achievement. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Governors and trustees have a vision for the school's development. They are knowledgeable, well informed and offer leaders appropriate challenge and support.
- The school is maintained as a bright, welcoming, safe and secure environment. Pupils say that they feel safe and safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Parents are positive about the school and recognise the improvements and rapid changes that have been made.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership in the early years to ensure that:
 - the provision of equipment, resources and activities in the outdoor learning area is appropriate for children of all ages using the space
 - all staff know how to accurately assess what children already know and can do and plan effectively for what they need to learn next.
- Continue to improve teaching and learning through:
 - sharing existing good practice and ensuring that teachers consistently apply the same high standards for learning and behaviour in all year groups and across all subjects
 - securing consistently precise planning so that the work set meets the needs of all pupils and ensures that they make good progress
 - ensuring that in phonics all assistants and support staff have the specific skills necessary to support pupils' learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - distributing leadership further and continuing to develop the role of subject leaders so that they have the skills and subject knowledge to secure the progression of skills and knowledge throughout the curriculum
 - developing the school's assessment system across all curriculum areas, so that senior managers and subject leaders can readily check progress for all individuals and groups of pupils and assess the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Good leadership and management, coupled with support from the trust, have ensured that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Leaders and governors are continuously and earnestly addressing the areas for improvement following the previous section 5 inspection. They are ambitious for the school to gain good overall effectiveness as soon as possible.
- The partnership with a local school and the development of a new leadership team have been instrumental in ensuring that current pupils are now receiving a much improved education. Leaders have been single-minded in pursuing their improvement strategy with success. They have eradicated all inadequate teaching and are working determinedly to establish consistently good teaching. Staff are increasingly sharing leaders' high expectations and, as a result, are working hard to secure the changes that are necessary.
- The executive headteacher has managed an ongoing period of staff instability and turbulence with many teachers employed temporarily, returnees from periods of leave and some who are new to the school. Through induction and training the executive headteacher and her senior team have been successful in maintaining continuity of provision and minimising disruption. Even so, staffing difficulties have contributed to unevenness in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders, through careful discussion and monitoring, have evaluated the quality of teaching and learning accurately. They are aware of what needs to be done to bring about improvements. They have put training in place and implement carefully considered systems of support. For example, teachers have the weekly opportunity to plan learning with senior leaders who offer guidance on pupil engagement and appropriateness of challenge. The majority of teachers and support staff value the opportunities they are given to develop, and they understand how this is helping to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Newly qualified members of staff are well supported by the school and trust. They receive a thorough induction. Their training needs are carefully considered and matched to their own and the school's development priorities.
- The school has significantly changed its approach in the way that it manages its provision for pupils with SEND. The improved focus is on each pupil's specific learning needs and the appropriateness of the support that is provided. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) meets with parents, class teachers and support workers in order to build a full picture of each pupil. The SENCo participates in pupil progress meetings and supports teachers in planning for learning. In this way she ensures that the teaching and curriculum for pupils with SEND are appropriate and effective.
- The school is truly inclusive. It employs a growing team focused on the needs of the school's vulnerable pupils, for example a speech and language therapist and a family support worker. This team is having a significant impact on the lives of individuals and the school.

One parent's remark of one support worker was that her employment was 'the best thing they did'. As a consequence of this team approach, pupils who are vulnerable or with SEND are accessing the curriculum and making good progress with their learning.

- Additional funding is used well to provide support and ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged pupils. The school's leadership team is committed to overcoming any barriers to learning that may exist for this group and securing for them the very best outcomes. The enhanced provision, which includes additional in-class support and booster teaching, is continuously assessed, with leaders targeting higher attainment at greater depth by the end of key stage 2 for disadvantaged pupils. The school's strategies are proving successful and, in 2018, attainment for this group of pupils was in line with other pupils nationally at the expected level.
- The school uses additional funding from the sports premium grant to promote healthy lifestyles and to enable pupils to take part in inter-school tournaments. The grant has also been carefully used to provide new equipment, as well as a sports coach who offers a spectrum of additional physical activities at lunchtimes and before- and after-school clubs. The spending plan was developed in consultation with pupils whose wishes have been clearly responded to with the provision of new kit and football goals. This strategy has increased the opportunity for pupils to engage in physical activity. However, the school does not currently offer sufficient timetable of taught physical education lessons for all its pupils.
- The rejuvenation of the school woodland has enriched the curriculum. The skilled forest school practitioner has developed a curriculum in consultation with the class teachers. This provides opportunities for pupils to use their skills and knowledge in practical situations while also delivering a range of social benefits such as developing teamwork and collaborative learning.
- Memorable trips and learning opportunities, a wide range of popular after-school clubs, celebratory displays and assemblies all make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, during a citizenship assembly, pupils were asked to reflect on how they share information about themselves. They engaged in the learning and participated with thoughtful comments. The teacher then used this opportunity to reinforce key messages about the safe use of technology.
- The school is in the process of introducing a new curriculum. This is work in progress and inspectors were unable to determine its sufficiency and range of coverage. New subject leaders are enthusiastic, but their roles are not fully developed. They are being supported by experienced subject leaders from their partner school. School leaders agree that that subject leadership is in its infancy and is an important area for development.

Governance of the school

- Following a period of turbulence and uncertainty, the current governance arrangement of a single body for two partnered schools has been in place since the autumn of 2018. Governance is strong. Governors represent a wide range of skills and experience and use their knowledge to provide effective challenge and support. In this way governors are able to celebrate strengths as well as identify weaknesses and areas for improvement.

- Governors' understanding of the school's development needs is accurate. They have systems in place that allow them to regularly check on pupils' learning and on progress in specific areas of the school's development plan. Governors have been well supported by the trust, which has provided external verification of the effectiveness of leadership and management. For example, a recent trust-commissioned review confirmed governors' evaluation of the need for improvements to teaching in some areas of the school.
- There are link governors associated with all priority development areas. These governors meet senior leaders on a planned basis to check on progress against agreed milestones. Their findings and agreed next steps for action are subsequently reported to the whole governing body. This is effective work and is contributing significantly to the school's improvement.
- Governors ensure that their legal responsibilities, particularly in regard to safeguarding, are properly met and that systems are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's leadership team has made sure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are vigilant and proactive. The school, through its family support worker, engages closely with parents, carers and other agencies, such as the local multi-agency safeguarding hub, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders have ensured that appropriate staff training is in place. Safeguarding issues are discussed as necessary in staff meetings. The quality of the school's record-keeping is exemplary.
- Governors regularly check safeguarding procedures. They are aware of development needs and have accessed training appropriately. Governors have ensured that recruitment processes are secure, and all legal requirements are met.
- An overwhelming number of pupils feel safe in school and say that there are adults they can talk to if they are worried. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are rare and when they do occur they are dealt with effectively.
- The school site is maintained with pride and care. The premises provide a safe environment and pupils are appropriately supervised at all times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching in the school is not yet good. Leaders' recent actions are beginning to have the intended impact, but they are yet to secure a consistency of practice across the school. Staff turbulence has contributed to the difficulties in regard to this. In some year groups teachers' expectations are not high enough. Teachers are not sufficiently clear about the specific actions needed to improve pupils' progress. Curriculum time is not always well used and there are misconceptions within the assessment system. These factors impede the progress of pupils.
- Pupils' learning is sometimes too slow, and time is not well used. Where progress is not strong, teachers do not explain and demonstrate sufficiently clearly, and pupils are

unsure of what is expected of them. Often pupils are slow to start work and, because teachers do not insist, they do not listen carefully to instructions. For example, in an English lesson about persuasive texts, progress was limited because the task had not been demonstrated clearly and pupils focused on the illustrations in the texts rather than the use of persuasive language. In a parallel class where the teacher showed pupils how to use persuasive language in their writing, pupils made better progress.

- The level of challenge provided is sometimes too easy, especially for the most able pupils. Inspectors saw examples of this in some key stage 1 mathematics books where pupils were not being extended sufficiently and opportunities were not taken for them to make further gains in their learning.
- Some pupils are beginning to take greater pride in their work. This is because teaching staff have agreed new, higher standards for presentation. Even so, these are not being implemented with consistency across all classes and subjects.
- Phonics teaching requires improvement. Regular checking of how well pupils are doing has allowed teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to group them according to need. Engaging strategies are used in some groups but not consistently. Consequently, many pupils do not participate fully. Some support staff lack sufficient knowledge of how to teach phonics and do not correct pupils' mistakes. They do not pronounce sounds properly and in doing so reinforce inaccuracies.
- The teaching of early reading skills is not yet secure for all pupils. Less-able pupils in Year 2 are not able to properly use their phonics skills to break words down into shorter sounds to read them. In Year 3 less-able pupils apply their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words but require support in developing their comprehension skills.
- Pupils think that teachers set work that challenges them. This is not the case throughout the school. There is good evidence of strong writing in Years 5 and 6 and teachers' assessment of pupils' work matches the standards observed in books. In other year groups, most-able pupils who teachers assess as working at a higher standard do not produce writing that justifies this assessment. In these instances, the pitch of learning is not sufficiently high for the most able.
- There is limited evidence of pupils' work in their topic books. Expectations for pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics are not as high. Teachers have much to do to implement the new curriculum and fill historic gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- In upper key stage 2 the learning environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils are rarely distracted from their learning. They are well aware of the increased expectations of them. Teaching in these year groups is much stronger than elsewhere in the school and pupils make good progress. In a mathematics lesson, one class was developing fluency with calculations. They were working rapidly and accurately. In another, pupils were dividing fractions; they were modelling the problems using correct language and demonstrating good reasoning skills.
- Strong leadership in mathematics means that teaching in this subject is a growing strength. Teachers are making better use of resources to support learning and the new calculations policy is clear about the necessary progression in pupils' skills development. Regular checking of pupils' workbooks has ensured that teachers build on a sequence of learning. Pupils increasingly have the opportunity to practise and

develop their calculation skills and apply them to problem-solving and reasoning activities. Formal methods are introduced appropriately, and progress is evident as pupils are starting to gain from carefully planned teaching.

- Teaching in the woodland area is a strength. All pupils benefit from a carefully planned outdoor curriculum. The older pupils use their knowledge of geometry and their design and making skills to construct bird boxes. In a key stage 1 lesson, pupils were tasked to make hedgehog nests from found materials such as leaves and twigs. They were able to share opinions and work together thoughtfully. They then evaluated the success of their constructions by testing their insulating properties. Pupils are enthused by this approach to learning and enjoy all that the well-resourced woodland space has to offer.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils said that their teachers listen carefully to them and that they are safe in school.
- Pupils' needs are managed appropriately. The school has developed effective partnerships with parents who may require help and support with their child's medical or emotional issues. As a result, there is clear evidence of improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance, resulting in better progress and more positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils enjoy school. They uphold the school's values in their open and welcoming behaviours. They are tolerant and understand the importance of being respectful to others. Throughout the inspection pupils were happy to talk about learning and those aspects of school they most enjoy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have responded well to the recent focus on behaviour. Leaders make sure that all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. They maintain careful records, following up issues as they arise, and are active in providing additional support from external agencies whenever necessary. The frequency of incidents of poor behaviour is reducing.
- During the inspection pupils were kind to each other, thoughtful and respectful. The school promotes positive attitudes to learning and in lessons pupils are generally calm. Low-level disruption is rare.
- The school uses a wide range of strategies to maintain its attendance record. Regular checking of attendance data enables the leadership team to identify pupils and families that are of concern, and to act swiftly to provide support. This positive approach and use of awards, such as an in-school breakfast, reinforces the importance of good attendance. Pupils enjoy being in school where they feel respected and value the adults that support them. The overwhelming majority would recommend Grove Primary

to a friend.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The rigorous use of assessment that led to the improved outcomes for Year 6 in 2018 was not applied to all year groups throughout the school and especially in the key stage 1 classes. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check fell again for the third consecutive year. Year 2 pupils' attainment in the national tests also dropped considerably to below national averages. However, among some staff, expectations and standards have not been high enough.
- In 2018, the percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. The percentage attaining at the higher standard in reading and mathematics and/or greater depth in writing was also above the national average.
- A recent review of phonics teaching has resulted in some improvements with senior leaders aiming for a significant improvement in results this year. They are providing training and support for selected staff to improve their skills and achieve better outcomes for pupils.
- Key stage 2 results in 2018 show that disadvantaged pupils' attainment at the expected standard is similar to other pupils nationally, although few achieve the higher standards. The school's pupil premium strategy is focused on further improving progress for this group of pupils by overcoming their barriers to learning. Most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress.
- In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 pupils are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects leaders' actions to ensure higher standards this year. The evidence in pupils' workbooks suggests that, while it remains inconsistent, the majority of pupils are now making better progress.
- Shared work with the partner school is addressing wider curriculum deficits, though there is much to do to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to fully apply their English and mathematics skills and knowledge more thoroughly across the curriculum.
- Work in English books demonstrates that the presentation and content of pupils' work have improved. Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to use a range of punctuation tools accurately in their writing and can apply techniques such as the use of parenthesis and similes to their work. The school is taking a more cohesive approach to how it teaches spelling. As a result, pupils across the school are becoming more confident writers.
- In mathematics, the school is adopting an approach that better develops reasoning skills. Pupils are now able to use a range of modelling and mental strategies as well as apparatus to assist in solving problems, and are more confident in checking their understanding than pupils were in the past. Work in books shows progress and a growing fluency in mathematics since the start of the academic year.
- The additional funding for pupils with SEND is being used effectively. There is clear evidence that these pupils are now making good progress from their varying starting points. They have specific learning targets and are well supported in achieving these.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management in the early years require improvement. Children in the early years enjoy learning but do not make good progress.
- Staff changes within the early years have presented challenges in ensuring consistency in teaching and in addressing areas of underperformance. However, there have been recent improvements in the quality of the indoor learning environment, which is bright, welcoming and well resourced.
- The outdoor learning environment mixes provision for Nursery and Reception children. They move between activities irrespective of age or appropriateness. Leaders do not plan sufficiently carefully to ensure age-appropriate learning for both age groups.
- The staff team does not yet have an accurate understanding of children's learning and how to use this knowledge to plan for the next steps in children's learning. School leaders have identified improvements in the quality of observations and assessments made by teachers and support staff, but the accuracy of assessment is not yet good.
- Children are happy, confident and articulate. Their learning behaviour is good. A group of Nursery children sat independently at a table making Valentine's cards. They happily discussed their work, with one pointing to their picture saying, 'this is a sweetheart'. They listen and respond well to the adults in the classrooms and move between activities sensibly and purposefully. As a result, the setting is busy with enthusiastic and energetic children.
- Phonics teaching in the early years has some strengths. Children were engaged in their learning, enjoying the familiar routines of these sessions. When learning was strong teachers used effective strategies for learning. The children listened carefully to each other and took turns appropriately. However, some staff were not using the correct pronunciation of sounds and were not as effective in implementing engaging strategies. In these instances, the sounds were not taught accurately, and misconceptions were not promptly corrected.
- The 'Wow Wall' has examples of children's early writing. Teaching is focusing on children's development in writing and progress is being made. Children are attempting writing in a range of forms, such as stories and instructions. Some use well-formed letters and their attempts at spelling show phonic knowledge. However, this work is underdeveloped. In the past, too few children, particularly boys, reached the early learning goals for writing by the end of Reception.
- Children clearly enjoy learning. They are kind and work well together. A group of boys was outside with washing-up bowls, collecting water for the mud kitchen. It was wet, and extremely messy, but it stimulated a lot of talk, interest and vigorous activity. The children worked together using a range of skills and ideas. Adults' interaction with children was limited and they did not take valuable opportunities for furthering learning.
- Attention has been paid to the early years setting to ensure that it is safe and secure. The school's transition arrangements for children starting school include home visits and taster sessions. In this way, children and parents are well prepared and know what to expect. The majority of Nursery children move into Reception and stay at the school

for the remainder of their primary education.

School details

Unique reference number	140823
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10053400

This inspection of the school 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	345
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Jackie Cutchey
Executive headteacher	Mrs Rae Aldous
Telephone number	01502 538527
Website	www.groveprimaryschool.org
Email address	r.aldous@groveprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The school became an academy in May 2014, sponsored by the Active Learning Trust.
- The school is partnered with Westwood Primary, also a member of the Active Learning Trust, and shares a joint governing body. The majority of governors are trust appointees.
- The multi-academy trust, through its organisation of a local hub of schools and professional networks, provides ongoing improvement support for Grove Primary.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is lower than for most primary schools nationally. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is approximately double the national average.

- The majority of pupils are White British.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection followed two monitoring inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors after the previous section 5 inspection found the school to be inadequate.
- The inspectors looked at teaching in all classes. They were joined by the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers for many of these observations.
- Pupils were observed during assembly and at playtimes. An inspector also held a meeting with the school council. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to pupils read from key stages 1 and 2. Inspectors also checked work in a range of pupils' books from across the school.
- Discussions on a wide range of school activities were held with five governors, two representatives of the Active Learning Trust, the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff members, including the SENCo.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including those relating to development planning, assessment, special needs, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors spoke to parents in the morning in the school playground. They considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 30 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Richards, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ashley Best-White	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Pedlow	Ofsted Inspector

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