

Inspection of Grovelands Community Primary School

Dunbar Drive, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3UW

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Good |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
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| Personal development | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Early years provision | Good |
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| Previous inspection grade | Good |
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders set unwaveringly high expectations for every member of the school community. The headteacher's vision and ambition are clearly communicated. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are fully on board, enjoying the exciting journey of school improvement. As one parent wrote, 'Our children are thriving here.'

Pupils attend school regularly because they love learning. They enjoy all aspects of school life, especially mathematics, art and performing in productions. Staff bring learning to life for pupils, through visits and purposeful lessons. For example, in mathematics, Year 1 pupils have discovered that Arthur, the axolotl, has doubled in length since he joined Grovelands. Year 3 pupils making scarab beetles from clay have thought carefully about design and sculpture techniques they have learned and plan to use.

When The Dell, the specialist teaching unit, was opened in September 2019, leaders ensured that all pupils at Grovelands had a sound understanding of autism spectrum disorder. Pupils told us that everyone gets the help they need. Difference is celebrated and embraced.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying does not happen often and that staff deal with it well when it does. Pupils behave well. Classrooms are full of eager pupils, trying their best.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders put the interests of pupils at the heart of every decision they make. This includes the many successful changes to the quality of education. Current pupils learn well. Past results have not been good enough at the end of key stage 2, due to a legacy of underachievement. Staff say that the arrival of the headteacher has brought their teaching 'buzz' back. Staff morale is high and relationships are strong. All staff have high expectations for behaviour and pupils rise to them.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Phonics is taught well and pupils quickly learn to read words using familiar sounds. Leaders have made sure that pupils practise these sounds regularly. Younger pupils read books that carefully match the sounds they know. Leaders provide extra help for any pupils who are falling behind. Pupils told us they like reading. We saw children enjoying stories with their parents and carers during the weekly 'share a book' session. The school's 'essential reads' ensure that pupils read a wide variety of material, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Leaders make sure that pupils study a wide range of subjects. In most subjects, teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it. For example, leaders have given much thought to ensure that pupils' historical skills develop well. This was clear in a Year 3 history lesson. Pupils were investigating artefacts and could make connections between what they could see and what they already knew about

Egyptian life. In other subjects, such as geography and art, sequences of learning are less developed and pupils do not learn quite as well. Subject leaders know the changes that are needed and have started on this work.

Staff are ambitious for what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, including in The Dell. However, this is not as effective for lower-attaining pupils as teachers do not always understand well enough what these pupils can and cannot yet do. Work is sometimes too difficult. When this is the case these pupils lose focus, and this hampers their learning.

Children settle quickly into early years, engaging with adults well. Enjoying stories and developing language are at the heart of the early years curriculum. For example, children in the Nursery are able to retell stories, such as the 'Greedy Green Python', in detail, using puppets to support them.

In Reception, caring and attentive support guides children, building their confidence and curiosity. Overall, teachers use the ambitious curriculum to plan interesting activities. However, staff do not always use their observations well enough to identify what children understand and what their next steps in learning should be. This means that sometimes staff's support for children as they learn is not matched well enough to their needs. Leaders have plans in place to strengthen this aspect of work.

Leaders support pupils in knowing how to be good learners by linking learning values to characters. For example, 'Sherlock Bones', the dog, encourages pupils to seek challenges in their work. Pupils like it when they have work that makes them think. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, such as digital leaders and sports leaders. Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at Grovelands. Staff know pupils well. Everybody understands their role in making sure that pupils are safe. Induction of new staff and volunteers is thorough. Training is regular and up to date. The designated safeguarding leader works effectively with social care. She makes sure pupils and their families get the help they need. Safeguarding records are well kept and actions swift.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. For example, a recent assembly has helped pupils understand age restrictions on social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made sure that the progression of skills and knowledge in most subjects is well planned. However, in some subjects, such as geography and art, this is not so well developed yet. Where this is the case, teachers do not know exactly what to teach when and pupils do not always remember what they have learned. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are well sequenced so that pupils build their understanding securely over time.
- Teachers understand how to adapt the curriculum well for pupils with SEND. However, sometimes teachers do not use assessment well enough to plan work for lower-attaining pupils. This hinders some pupils' progress over time. Leaders need to make sure that all teachers use assessment skilfully so that teaching builds on what pupils already know and understand.
- Leaders have a clear vision of how they want children in the early years to learn. They have constructed well-sequenced plans for learning. However, sometimes teachers in Reception do not take enough account of children's prior learning. Leaders should make sure that teaching consistently builds on what children already know and understand.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 114393 |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10133154 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 704 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Paul Young |
| Headteacher | Jon Goulding |
| Website | www.grovelands-school.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 21–22 October 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post in January 2018.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded early years provision by taking over the running of Acorns Nursery. This includes eight places for two-year-old children and 40 places for three- and four-year-olds, who attend either full or part time. In addition, there are three Reception classes for four- and five-year-old children, who attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than average. The local authority allocates eight places in a specialist SEND unit, The Dell. This unit provides for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. The unit opened in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- As part of this inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. We also met with the leader responsible for early years and the pastoral lead.

- We did deep dives in: reading, mathematics, geography, physical education, science and history. These subjects were considered closely to evaluate the quality of education. This involved speaking to subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and looked at a range of pupils' work and leaders' planning, as well as hearing some pupils read. We also met with the computing, religious education and art leaders.
- We visited the early years, including the nursery.
- We spoke to some pupils informally on the playground and at lunchtime. We also met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour, learning and school life.
- We met with the chair of the governing body and four additional governors. We spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. Discussions were also held with teachers and support staff.
- We considered a range of school documentation, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans, and records about behaviour, exclusions and attendance. We scrutinised published information about pupils' achievement and looked at the school's website.
- To inspect safeguarding, we met with the school's designated safeguarding leader, spoke to staff, governors and pupils, checked recruitment procedures and looked at safeguarding records and policies.
- We spoke to parents during the inspection and considered the 156 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 74 free-text comments. In addition, 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were considered, as were 73 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Lea Hannam, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Linda Taylor | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Jenner | Ofsted Inspector |
| Peter Wibroe | Ofsted Inspector |

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