

Inspection of a good school: Grove Road Primary School

Grove Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5PD

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 April 2022

Outcome

Grove Road Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Grove Road Primary School is a place where children feel happy and well cared for. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to attend clubs and to go on trips. Pupils say that they are taught that it is 'good to be different'. They like the way that staff make them feel 'unique'. Teachers do this by encouraging pupils to 'be themselves'.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They like learning and being with their friends. Pupils are also encouraged to be independent. For example, they can check their own work at a class 'checking station'. Pupils like this because it motivates them, and they can see their own progress.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite to each other and to staff. Staff help pupils to settle after breaktimes and lunchtimes. They think of additional ways to help calm pupils who may be experiencing anxiety, for example through the provision of a lunchtime space for pupils to talk to an adult. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and if it does happen, adults help to put things right. Pupils talk fondly of the ways that the adults help them to learn how to be good friends, for example through their 'pro-social practice' lessons.

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

Leaders have given a lot of attention to developing the school's curriculum. They have worked together to identify and sequence the important knowledge and skills to be included in each subject. Leaders have also set out the vocabulary that pupils will learn in each subject. This helps teachers to plan their lessons. Leaders are rightly proud of the work on the curriculum that has been done. The curriculum meets the aims of the national curriculum, is ambitious and meets the needs of pupils. Pupils can remember, and enjoy talking about, what they have learned.

Teachers think carefully about how to explain concepts to pupils. They consider the small steps that pupils will need to take to secure knowledge before moving on. They model new content and language. In some subjects, teachers provide useful physical resources

and diagrams to help pupils to understand. This attention to detail means that the needs of the range of pupils in classes, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are met.

Pupils' opportunities to rehearse knowledge are mostly purposeful and well sequenced. For example, 'fluency practice' is provided at the beginning of mathematics lessons. This gives pupils the chance to recall useful mathematical facts and procedures that will help them with their problem-solving. Teachers' checks of how much pupils have remembered are regular, but do not place too much of a burden on staff.

The curriculum for early reading is well sequenced. Leaders have provided training to staff in how to teach the sounds and letter combinations so that pupils can be successful. Teachers are careful to correct pupils' mistakes. Teachers regularly read varied and interesting stories to children. Subject experts from the local secondary school also help older pupils to hone their love of reading by facilitating opportunities to share, learn about and discuss more complex literature. Pupils who need additional support to catch up are identified early and given the help they need. Leaders have put in place support for weaker readers. In early years, children learn songs, nursery rhymes and stories off by heart. This helps to boost their confidence and develop their speech and language. On occasion, the activities chosen for pupils to practise their phonics knowledge do not help all pupils to remember what is taught as well as they might. Nonetheless, most pupils are progressing well with their reading.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they model positive relationships to the pupils. In lessons, teachers give pupils praise for their effort and progress. Relationships are warm. Pupils are keen to learn and to take on responsibilities. They behave well.

Leaders have provided a range of opportunities to attend clubs and go on trips. Pupils also enjoy learning from the visitors that leaders have invited into the school. For example, pupils spoke about how visitors teach them about different religions and historical periods. Older pupils can also take on a range of responsibilities, including becoming sports captains and 'buddies' for children who are new to the school.

Provision for pupils with SEND is a strength at this school. Leaders have invested in additional adult support and they have worked closely with teachers to ensure that pupils' additional needs are met. Pupils' needs are identified early on and leaders work well with outside agencies and with parents. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are being prepared well for the next stage in learning and in life.

Trust leaders and governors are committed to providing a high-quality curriculum and investing in their staff. Their decision to expand the school's leadership team has provided additional leadership capacity to develop the curriculum and to develop the role of subject leaders. Staff appreciate leaders' attention to staff workload and well-being. They cite positive changes that leaders have set in place which have led to a direct reduction in workload, for example through adopting in-class marking.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented an electronic system to record concerns. Safeguarding records are audited regularly. Leaders are swift to identify and respond to concerns. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters, including those that are pertinent to the local community. Leaders involve outside agencies and communicate regularly with parents. Staff know the children and their families well.

Leaders have provided regular safeguarding training for staff. They have also ensured that pupils are taught how to keep safe, including online. The school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, activities planned for pupils to take part in during phonics lesson do not match the aims of the curriculum. As a result, phonics lessons are not always as effective as they could be, and pupils are not always given the best opportunities to rehearse and revisit their phonics knowledge. Leaders should train and work with teachers to organise appropriate activities that will help all pupils to practise their phonics knowledge well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Grove Road Primary School, to be good in May 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	145255
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10227561
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julian Crane
Headteacher	Sharon Wilson
Website	www.groveroad.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has expanded to include an assistant headteacher and a head of inclusion.
- Grove Road Primary School converted to become an academy school in July 2017. When its predecessor school, Grove Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school runs a nursery on site. This caters for three- and four-year-olds. Children can attend morning and/or afternoon sessions.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with trustees, governors, members of the school leadership team and the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from Herts for Learning.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke with school and trust leaders and reviewed the school's documentation. The inspector also met with teachers and groups of pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents related to the work of the school and that of the trust.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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