

# Inspection of a good school: The Grove Junior School

Dark Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 1QB

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2022

## **Outcome**

The Grove Junior School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love attending The Grove. They learn in a calm, respectful atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and trust the adults who work with them. As a result, relationships in the school are warm and caring.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They are keen to become 'Governeers' and represent their fellow pupils. They live up to the school's values of 'Respect, Responsibility, Resilience'. In lessons, they help and support each other. They work and play well together.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their learning. Pupils are independent learners. They work hard and want to do well. They are proud of their school. They listen to their teachers and behave well.

Bullying is rare but when it does happen, teachers are quick to respond. Pupils have confidence in staff and know they will help to sort out any problems that occur.

Pupils are keen to help and support each other outside of the classroom too. They appreciate the help of the pupil mental health champions. They can turn to them at playtime if they are lonely or need support.

Pupils are positive about the wide range of clubs they can and do attend, including choir, cookery and many sports clubs.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that has been well thought through. It is ordered well, so that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers use leaders' curriculum plans to introduce new vocabulary to pupils. Teachers build well on the previous knowledge that pupils have learned. Some leaders provide resources so that teachers have help to prepare their lessons. In a few subjects, leaders' curriculum

thinking is less clear. In these subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the precise knowledge that pupils need to move through the curriculum. Teachers then do not have guidance and support to ensure pupils make the progress they are capable of.

Reading is taught well. Pupils who are still in the early stages of learning to read have extra opportunities to catch up. Staff who work with these pupils are well trained to teach phonics. They keep careful checks on pupils' progress. Staff ensure that pupils read from books that contain the sounds that they have learned. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their reading. Teachers ensure that pupils learn new words that they will come across before they read them so that they understand what they are reading. This helps pupils become fluent, confident readers who enjoy reading.

Curriculum leaders have the training required to lead their subjects effectively. They share this training with teachers. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain things clearly to pupils. They teach well. Pupils become confident learners. They understand and are expected to remember their learning. Lessons run smoothly. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils understand this.

Teachers use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers go over learning from previous lessons. This helps pupils to remember new knowledge, including new words. Teachers correct pupils' misunderstandings. Pupils learn well as a result and discuss their learning confidently in a range of subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. They have carefully adapted teaching or support that allows them to be successful. Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND and plan their support effectively. Pupils with SEND benefit from the same broad curriculum as their classmates.

Leaders have built a wide range of opportunities beyond the curriculum. This ensures that pupils grow personally as well as academically. These opportunities include taking part in musical and theatrical performances, representing the school in sporting events and applying for roles in school. Pupils know that people are different. The curriculum supports learning about a range of people, their religions and cultures. Pupils understand, for example, that different religions have different sacred books and traditions. They respect this.

Leaders and governors work together to identify priorities to improve the school further. Governors know the school well and visit regularly to support leaders in their work. Leaders take teachers' workload into account when planning changes and development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to spot any concerns they may have about pupils. They know the range of risks that pupils face. Leaders respond to concerns quickly. They work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive appropriate support.

Pupils are well supported by the curriculum to keep themselves safe. They know how to stay safe when working online and how to have positive relationships with others. Governors work with leaders to ensure that safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all appropriate pre-employment checks are made before staff work at the school. These checks are recorded accurately.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, there is not a clearly laid out plan for what pupils need to know or when they should learn this knowledge. Teachers then have to decide what to teach and when. When this happens, important subject knowledge is not taught in the correct order or in depth. This does not help pupils build on what they already know. Leaders must develop all curriculum plans, so that it is clear what to teach and when, including key vocabulary.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2013.

## **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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117258
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241547
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Thomas Parrot and Sarbjit Sahota
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorna Urquhart
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thegrovejunior.co.uk">www.thegrovejunior.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new leadership team is in place since the previous inspection.
- The school uses a registered alternative provision for pupils when required.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff, including the inclusion leader and leader responsible for the pupil premium grant.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each of these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at plans and pupils' work from other curriculum subjects.

- The inspector met with safeguarding leaders to examine the single central record and leaders' records of safeguarding. The inspector spoke with leaders, including the designated safeguarding leads, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the 175 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 168 free-text responses. The inspector also took account of 71 responses to the pupil survey and 37 responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Debbie Rogan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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