

# Inspection of The Grove Primary School

Oakfield Lane, The Grove, Consett, County Durham DH8 8AP

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils, and children in the early years, enjoy learning at The Grove Primary School. Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum with high aspirations for all pupils. The school is inclusive and uses a range of approaches to meet the needs of all. The motto is 'The Grove School Cares', and this is tangible in the work that the school does.

Leaders are passionate that children become readers as soon as they can. The teaching of early reading is effective, and the school's chosen reading scheme is delivered consistently well.

Pupils feel safe, and have positive relationships with staff across the school. Pupils' behaviour is good. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to support a small number of older pupils with more complex needs. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

There is a determination for children to get off to the best start in school – early years is a clear area of strength. Children in early years quickly acquire the skills they need to manage their own feelings and behaviour and to form successful relationships with their friends. They have strong relationships with staff, and flourish as a result of the teaching and care they receive.

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

Leaders have purposefully sequenced the key knowledge and vocabulary they want children to learn. They have a good understanding of the prior knowledge pupils need to achieve well. Assessment informs teachers about gaps in learning, and they address them. In early reading, assessment is particularly effective. In some subjects, such as mathematics, assessment systems are not fully refined. This means that teachers do not have the full picture about gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

Teachers teach early reading well. They assess children quickly and ensure that teaching meets their needs. The teaching of phonics is consistent and effective. Pupils join in well. Staff are well trained and are able to identify what children have learned. Pupils who need further support receive timely interventions from skilled staff to help them catch up with their peers. Reading books are matched to the sounds pupils are already familiar with. Records show pupils read in different subjects and to adults at home. In mathematics, pupils achieve well. Pupils' work shows their development in their mathematical understanding. Pupils can explain the strategies they have used. Teachers use resources well to support pupils' learning. In early years, teachers have good subject knowledge and model mathematics clearly to children.

Many subject leaders know their subjects well and have clear steps for further improvement. Leaders check the work children produce. This is more embedded in

some subjects than others. In science, pupils use the same books so they can see how their prior knowledge forms the building blocks for new knowledge. In other subjects, pupils' work reflects the curriculum and builds from one lesson to the next.

Adults model language well in early years. Children are exposed to a rich vocabulary and carefully designed activities. Across school, lessons and pupils' work show that staff use strategies consistently to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff identify any additional needs that pupils have quickly. This means that they receive carefully considered support.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are interested in lessons and there are no disruptions to learning. In early years, children are able to sustain their concentration and work on a task for a long period of time. Behaviour in and around school is good. Pupils are respectful and courteous. They follow instructions and established routines well. The recently introduced behaviour policy is well understood by both pupils and staff. Leaders have taken the necessary actions to ensure that a small minority of pupils with complex needs have appropriate external support. Attendance for some pupils improves rapidly when receiving support from school. However, some information relating to pupils' attendance is not analysed swiftly enough to inform leaders' actions.

Teachers teach personal development in a variety of ways. The curriculum is varied and teaches pupils about healthy and unhealthy relationships, safety and mental health. Pupils know about diversity and are able to talk about Rosa Parks and her experience of racism in the United States. They enjoy electing the school council and head boy and girl. Pupils are positive about their experiences in school. They explain how they received an award for improving their outdoor play and learning at break and lunchtimes. There is effective pastoral support and leaders take opportunities to establish strong links with the local community.

The local governing body has a good understanding of the school. Its members understand its strengths. They have a good grasp of both academic and pastoral priorities and are proactive in their approach. They support and challenge leaders well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have undertaken recent safeguarding training and receive regular updates. Staff report concerns promptly and these are followed up in a timely manner. There is a culture of safeguarding among staff.

Leaders take appropriate and effective action to ensure that pupils and their families get the correct support. Leaders challenge other professionals when appropriate.

Pupils feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of different situations. They can talk knowledgeably about the risks to their safety online, and steps they take to protect their personal information.

However, some safeguarding training records are not kept together. This means some staff could be missed when safeguarding checks are carried out.

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

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

- Records about staff safeguarding training and understanding of policies such as the whistle-blowing policy are not all kept in one place. This means that it is possible that some staff could be missed when checks on safeguarding training are carried out. Leaders should ensure that records relating to safeguarding are complete and kept in one place.
- In some subjects, assessment systems are not fully embedded and sometimes assess knowledge that has yet to be taught. This means that teachers do not have sufficient information to ensure that the next steps that they plan for pupils are accurate. Leaders should continue to develop and embed systems for assessment across all subjects.
- Leaders' analysis of information about pupils' attendance, in some cases, does not lead to a sufficiently proactive approach to improve the attendance of some pupils. This means that these pupils are missing too much of their learning. Leaders should make better use of attendance information so that their approach to improving pupils' attendance shifts from largely reactive to proactive.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 114046   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Durham   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10242185   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 211  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Michelle Thompson  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Bernadette Atkinson  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.thegroveprimaryschool.co.uk">www.thegroveprimaryschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                          |

## Information about this school

- The school serves an area of higher-than-average deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early years leader, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority, and with members of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, governors, and parents and carers. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the deputy headteacher and the pastoral support worker.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school. As well as speaking to parents outside school, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and a number of free text-responses. Staff's views were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

|                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Paul Martindale, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jonathan Glazzard               | Ofsted Inspector |

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