

Inspection of The Grove

Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London N17 6AR

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy to attend this exceptional school. They feel safe and enjoy their lessons. Leaders have paid particular attention to ensuring that pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral care and support. Staff treat pupils with dignity and respect and they are always looking out for any signs that a pupil might need extra help or support. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils are supported very well to manage their own behaviour. Bullying or unkind behaviour is never tolerated.

The school's vision threads through everything. In particular, leaders have a relentless focus on communication, independence, emotional resilience and preparation for adult life. This is seen in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils make choices, develop opinions and express their hopes and dreams for the future. In the sixth form, there is a strong emphasis on getting ready for employment.

Lessons are lively and fun. Leaders and school staff expect all pupils to learn a wide range of subjects as well as developing their social and communication skills. Leaders provide many extra activities that are designed to match pupils' interests, for example a 'forest school' and learning to swim and be confident in water.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a highly ambitious and rich curriculum in place for all pupils. They have carefully identified the important things that pupils should know and remember. Expert teachers and teaching assistants adapt lessons so that pupils can learn and retain this key information.

Leaders have created five different curriculum pathways through the school. The content of the pathways matches the pupils' needs closely. Each one is equally ambitious and sets out learning in a logical sequence so that pupils build on bits of knowledge that they have already understood. For example, in personal, social and health education (PSHE), some pupils learn about what to do if they feel worried or frightened when they are out in the community, and others are supported to learn about well-being strategies. Teachers use assessment very well, to check pupils' progress through the curriculum, and to identify any pieces of information that have not been securely understood.

Staff understand pupils' complex needs extremely well and they use this understanding to create a positive and calm atmosphere in which all pupils can achieve their best. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities that help them to strengthen their specialist knowledge further. Staff say that the school is a busy place to work, but that leaders consider their workload.

Reading is prioritised at the school. Leaders have set up a system for teaching phonics which is very well organised. Staff adapt it carefully to the needs of the

pupils they teach. The books that pupils take home to read are closely matched to the sounds that they are learning.

The positive approach that leaders have developed for behaviour management is very well established in the school. Staff use a range of methods to help pupils stay focused on their lessons. If pupils do need help to regulate their emotions, this is done skilfully and pupils soon return to learning.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' personal development is very well catered for. Central to this provision is a carefully considered programme which strengthens pupils' communication and social skills. Pupils learn and practise important life skills, such as cooking, sometimes in the 'school flat'.

Pupils learn about the world of work throughout their time at the school. In the sixth form, this is given even more focus. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, which could involve college placements, apprenticeships and supported internships. Careers education is of a very high standard. Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to independent advice and guidance on their future destinations and to regular and meaningful work placements with local employers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have ensured that the policies, systems and practices to ensure that pupils remain safe are robust and comprehensive. This includes the statutory checks on all staff employed at the school and volunteers.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates the school. Staff are well trained and rigorous in their approach to checking the well-being and safety of pupils. Staff raise any concern that they might have, no matter how small it may appear, and safeguarding leaders are vigilant in following up concerns.

Safeguarding leaders keep meticulous records. They meet regularly to reflect on what they know about pupils and to keep a careful watch. They are acutely aware of the context of the school and pupils' vulnerabilities.

When necessary, leaders make sure that pupils get support from external agencies without delay.

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

Unique reference number	145917
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10255283
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Sumner
Headteacher	Lucia Santi
Website	www.thegroveschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Grove School is a special school for pupils with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of Search Education Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors, the chair of trustees and the chief executive for the trust.
- Inspectors met with the safeguarding leads, and scrutinised school policies and records of the safeguarding checks on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered some other subjects, including art and design, PSHE and geography.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and the 46 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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