

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Grove Wood Primary School

Grove Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8UA

---

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Richard Green. This school is the only school that is part of The Grove Wood Academy Trust. Trustees also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Guy Blakesley.

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

Pupils arrive excited to start the day. They are enthused by their lessons and try hard. When asked about their learning, pupils are exuberant in their responses. Most pupils learn and achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the facilities, resources and opportunities provided for them. In addition to the wide range of well-considered trips, visits and visiting speakers, pupils access a huge array of clubs. Pupils appreciate that the school listens to them and creates the clubs that match their interests.

Pupils show exceptional kindness and care to each other and their staff. They role model the school's SPARK values (strive, positivity, achieve, respect and kindness). Pupils strive to be positive members of their school community. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

As they get older, pupils value the array of opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, such as reading ambassadors, house captains and school council executives. They act as excellent role models for younger pupils.

Pupils feel safe because they trust staff to look after them. They say that staff help pupils to sort out any minor disagreements. Most feel that bullying never happens. When asked what could be improved about the school, many pupils told inspectors, 'Nothing, it's perfect here. We don't want to leave.'

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to develop the scope and breadth of the curriculum, especially extra-curricular opportunities. This is a remarkable strength of the offer to pupils.

Staff, many of whom have been at the school for some time, teach areas such as early reading, English and mathematics effectively. As a result, most pupils learn and achieve very well in these areas. However, in some subjects, curriculum planning, staff training and the school's monitoring are less well developed. In these subjects, pupils do not develop the same deep understanding they achieve in the other subject areas. This prevents them from applying learning in more complex ways.

Starting in Reception, pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy rhymes, stories and reading. Staff deliver the school's chosen phonics programme effectively. Books and resources that pupils use closely match the sounds they are learning. The youngest pupils access daily phonics sessions, one-to-one reading with adults and wider reading opportunities. Many pupils go on to read fluently and independently. As pupils get older, they have many opportunities to read, including in the school's two well-used libraries.

The provision for pupils' well-being is exceptional. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Over time, the school has worked tenaciously to increase the support on offer to pupils, including through additional speech and language therapy and the well-trained inclusion team. Staff help pupils to develop independence and confidence.

Pupils, parents, staff and leaders are part of a close, and remarkably caring, community that supports and helps each other. Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive. Parents value the welcome given by the staff, especially the inclusion team, who they say are readily available to help make the start of the day a positive one. Staff value leaders' calm and measured approach to their workload.

Trustees and governors bring a wide range of expertise and undertake many aspects of their work with precision and incisiveness. However, the school's approach to monitoring does not provide them with sufficiently precise information about the difference work is making to those pupils who need help to catch up academically, including some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some areas of the curriculum are not precisely planned, delivered and monitored. In these areas, teachers make decisions about the content that is taught, without

sufficient training and oversight from the school. As a result, pupils are completing tasks that do not provide them with a rich understanding of the subject. The school should ensure that curriculum planning, staff training and leaders' monitoring improve the quality of pupils' learning in these subjects.

- The school, including trustees and governors, does not know precisely the difference that intervention, extra help, one-to-one support or additional funding make to those pupils who need extra help to catch up, including for some disadvantaged pupils. This is especially the case in reading and mathematics. The school and those responsible for governance should ensure that there are mechanisms to check on the effectiveness of additional support and funding in helping the most vulnerable pupils to learn and achieve well.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141052
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268007
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	630
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Guy Blakesley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Green
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.grovetwoodprimary.co.uk">www.grovetwoodprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is an academy converter. It is the only school within The Grove Wood Academy Trust.
- The school is not making use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the subject with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to adults teaching and/or supporting pupils, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also heard a selection of pupils read with an adult.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders. Inspectors also spoke to a local authority

officer and met with several members of the trust and governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. Inspectors considered 27 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. To gather further evidence about pupils' experiences, inspectors observed them at different times during the school day, spoke to them during free times and met with groups of pupils.
- The inspectors also took into account 175 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including comments in the free-text facility.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspectors took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff, reviewed five letters from staff and spoke to groups of staff during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Damian Loneragan

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023