

Inspection of The Grove Infant and Nursery School

Dark Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 1QD

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2007.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enthusiastic learners. They enjoy all their lessons and take part in learning with great enthusiasm. Pupils are treated with kindness and care by all staff members. As a result, they feel safe and are safe. Pupils are confident to share any worries they have. They trust school staff.

Pupils learn a broad curriculum. They remember their learning in each subject because teachers guide them to make connections and build on their previous learning. As a result, they can have meaningful discussions about interesting topics. For instance, they used what they have learned to explain why they would not want to live on the moon. Pupils leave very well prepared for learning successfully in junior school.

Staff's high expectations help pupils to behave exceptionally well. At wet playtime, pupils are calm and often choose to complete tasks based on their current class learning. This is due to their interest in their learning. Pupils are keen and happy to play with a wide friendship group.

Pupils can choose to take part in a wide variety of clubs. This enables them to find out what their interests and talents are. Pupils know that everyone is unique and that this should be shared and celebrated.

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

The school has well-sequenced subject plans. These plans identify small steps in learning needed to build towards understanding more complex knowledge. These begin in Nursery and Reception, where skilled staff develop children's knowledge and skills effectively. Children learn lots of new and carefully chosen words, often through the catchy and fun songs and rhymes that the staff have invented. This helps pupils start Year 1 with the secure understanding of the subject-specific language they need. Teachers in key stage 1 develop pupils from these strong starting points and they aim high. Pupils respond exceptionally well to this because they have all the knowledge and skills they need to achieve. All pupils achieve highly.

Teachers help pupils to recall prior knowledge effectively. Teachers make connections with learning from different subjects. New knowledge is made relevant by linking it to the world, the local area or current events. As a result, pupils build a depth of understanding about each subject and remember important subject knowledge. Children in the early years are active and engaged learners, due to the skilled staff creating exciting and precisely planned activities. This helps children to develop their knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They explain and model learning tasks extremely clearly to pupils. Pupils are then able to carry out activities confidently and with success. This means that they can practise using their

knowledge and show their deep understanding. Teachers quickly spot pupils' misconceptions. They then change their teaching skilfully to address any misunderstandings.

The school prioritises reading. In Nursery, children learn to recognise different sounds through music and songs. In Reception, children have highly effective, daily phonics sessions, where there is a strong focus on teaching children the sounds they need to be able to read and write words confidently. This very sound foundation is built on well in Year 1. Older pupils who are not yet fluent readers have catch-up sessions taught by skilled staff. This means that they develop into fluent readers. Pupils love reading and sharing books.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at the early stages in their education. The school works closely with parents. This ensures that staff fully understand pupils' needs. Some pupils with SEND have individual learning plans. These make sure that staff provide highly individualised support where and when this may be necessary. Pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils are highly motivated to learn and have extremely positive attitudes towards learning. The school creates a buzz around learning and ensures pupils are fully engaged. Pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated to learn. Pupils behave exceptionally well in class. They are kind to others in the playground.

Pupils' personal development is planned for comprehensively. Pupils learn about different cultures, countries and religions. As a result, pupils share and celebrate differences. They know that everyone should be treated with kindness and compassion. The school lays firm foundations that help prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for pupils' academic and personal development. They make sure that all plans and decisions made are in the best interests of the pupils and their education. Staff are supported particularly well with their well-being and workload. Parents are highly positive about the school because they know that their children are nurtured and helped to thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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| Unique reference number | 117281 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10211801 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 266 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Julie Moore |
| Headteacher | Anna Archer |
| Website | www.groveinfants.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 October 2007 |

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, geography and science. The inspectors also carried out further explorations into the personal, social and health education by looking at workbooks, carrying out some lesson visits and talking to pupils.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with some members of the governing body including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' school development plans and the school self-evaluation document.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and in lessons.
- One inspector met with parents before the start of the school day.
- The lead inspector considered the 202 responses and 137 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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