

# The Grove Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113234
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	289556
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Pyner HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Gifford-mead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Hanrott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	The Grove Totnes TQ9 5ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 862018
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Grove Primary School is average in size and is located in the centre of the historic town of Totnes. Its location ensures that it has a mixed intake, although the children's starting points in the Reception Year are broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are none for whom English is an additional language. The school is involved in a research project into learning strategies with London University. It delivers initial teacher training as part of the Devon SCITT consortium. The school is providing management and curriculum support for another primary school. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark Award, Healthy Schools Award, the Devon Physical Activity Award, a Bronze Award for its Travel Plan, the Silver Artsmark and the Leading Aspect Award for research in promoting children's independent learning.

At the end of this term the headteacher is leaving to take up the headship of another school.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'We feel that the teaching staff and support team are all very committed to providing a supportive environment where children not only are able to learn well, but also are encouraged to be kind and thoughtful of others.' This comment is typical of the overwhelmingly positive views that parents have of this school. It is indeed good overall, but there are also aspects which are outstanding. The dedicated headteacher sets high expectations and leads the school excellently. As a result, a very positive climate for learning and improvement has been created where every pupil is valued and supported to achieve their best. Pupils respond well to this by demonstrating very positive attitudes towards their work and excellent behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. The pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress during their time at school, benefiting from effective teaching based on a very good analysis of individual strengths and weaknesses. Trends in standards have been above average, with girls outperforming boys. However, the 2007 results for Year 6 pupils, yet to be validated, demonstrate an impressive improvement in standards, especially for boys. The strength of this improvement can be seen in the increased proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and especially science. This improvement reflects the very thorough tracking of achievement and focused teaching for groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Expectations in lessons are high, and practical activities are employed to reinforce learning and make it fun. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because it does not always provide pupils with clear guidance in lessons on how they can improve their work. Also marking, although positive, does not always give specific guidance for individual improvement.

The curriculum is broad and effectively matched to the needs of learners. Outstanding elements include the provision for creative and expressive arts, which contributes very significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, with a strong emphasis on personal development. The level of care, guidance and support is good overall. Care and support are outstanding.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork is a strong feature and review systems make a very effective contribution to school improvement. Subject leaders monitor standards and focus efforts on raising achievement very effectively. The impact of this can be seen in the impressive Year 6 results this year. School governance is very good. The governors are fully involved in school improvement and monitor its work thoroughly. The headteacher should be proud of the legacy of improvement that she leaves behind, and the systems she has put in place mean the school is well placed to continue to improve in spite of her impending departure.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers consistently make clear to pupils their next learning steps, both in marking and in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and trends show standards have been above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are broadly expected for their age. In

the Foundation Stage they make good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional development.

By the end of Year 2 standards are above average, with girls' achievement generally stronger than boys', particularly in writing. From Years 3 to 6, progress continues to be good. In 2006 pupils in Year 6 achieved results that were above average in English and science but in mathematics just slipped below average, reversing a trend of strong numeracy results. In the latest 2007 results, which have yet to be validated, there has been a strong improvement in mathematics, with results well above the national average for the previous year. Results at the higher level are particularly impressive, with over half the pupils gaining Level 5. Results in science are even better, with almost all pupils gaining the expected level and over three-quarters achieving Level 5. In 2006 girls achieved better than boys in English. The school has focused improvement work on boys' literacy, and particularly writing, with the result that in the 2007 tests almost all of the boys achieved the expected level in English and well over half achieved the higher level 5. Results for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are much improved over 2006, demonstrating the impact of systems to raise achievement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Overall, personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school's emphasis on the arts contributes very significantly to pupils' enjoyment and positive attitudes. This is reflected in the above-average attendance rate. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils work together well and treat each other and visitors with respect. Pupils feel safe and are confident that bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils also know ways of keeping safe, such as when using the Internet.

The school council is beginning to give pupils a voice in contributing to improving the school. Pupils value the opportunities they have for taking responsibility, such as older pupils looking after younger children. Although pupils have a good understanding of healthy foods, not all of them make healthy choices for their snacks or lunch. They enjoy having three PE lessons a week, and can explain why exercise is important to health. Good participation in the wide range of clubs and activities further supports their health and well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have excellent social skills, and feel that the school's behaviour policy is fair. They are quick to censure others who are unkind. Their understanding of other cultures and religions is good. They show great sensitivity towards the feelings and values of others. Pupils' awareness of themselves and others is good as a result of the many opportunities which teachers give them, as well as the numerous visitors the school welcomes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' capabilities and also of their attitudes and behaviour. Consequently, most lessons are calm and purposeful and move at a good pace, ensuring that pupils' interest is maintained and that challenge is appropriate for all abilities. However, when lessons are satisfactory, teaching does not make clear the learning steps the pupils need to make and this results in less progress. In the most effective lessons, good use

is made of 'learning walls' which provide spaces where pupils and teachers can place work to prompt and guide learning. However, the use of these is variable. Very good features of teaching are the practical activities which are used to reinforce learning. This was evident in one lesson where Key Stage 1 pupils were learning about fractions by folding strips of paper and then cutting them into halves, quarters and eighths. More-able pupils were challenged by measuring the strips and then calculating the length of each fraction before folding. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who have specific difficulties and find learning challenging. Work is marked regularly and with positive and encouraging comments. Although there are some good examples, there is less evidence in books of specific guidance to individual pupils on how they can improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, with outstanding features, and prepares pupils well for their adult lives, with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Art has an especially high profile and pupils reach high standards. Pupils greatly appreciate the wonderful range of enrichment activities they are offered, which include Spanish and French Clubs. Pupils also enjoy the themed projects they do when several subjects are linked together. This innovative practice helps pupils apply their skills in different contexts, such as using literacy in history. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties ensures that these pupils achieve similarly to their peers. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are not always short and specific enough to help support their next steps in learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, with an appropriate focus on developing children's personal skills. This results in good progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

One parent summed up the school's very effective approach to care and support by saying, 'I feel staff go out of their way to ensure children feel happy and secure in school'. Safeguarding and other arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety are very thorough. Close liaison with outside agencies and organisations strengthens the care and support which the school offers. Pupils experiencing problems benefit greatly from attending a special social skills group. Vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored to ensure their well-being. Pupils receive good guidance on their academic progress. The best guidance is when teachers tell pupils the learning steps they need to make during a lesson or when marking. However, the quality of guidance varies so that pupils do not always know how to improve, and not all pupils know their targets. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely through the progress books, but do not always share this with pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher displays excellent vision and leadership for the whole-school community. There is a strong feeling throughout the school that all can improve their achievement and the excellent systems in place underpin this aim. The headteacher is very well supported by all staff and teamwork is strong. The work of the subject leaders is outstanding, with the emphasis on improving achievement through analysis of performance and focusing support on areas of

weakness. The school takes very good account of the views of children and parents. This helps to inform the excellent self-evaluation process. Monitoring of teaching is rigorous and where weaknesses have been identified, robust support from within the school and local authority has been deployed. The school was already aware of the issue regarding better guidance for pupils.

Governors are very well informed and highly supportive, and they monitor the success of improvement strategies robustly. There are very effective links between individual governors and subject leaders. The 'learning walks' undertaken by governors provide them with good information about the work of the school, which is fully reported at meetings. Each year governors conduct a survey of parental views, which then forms part of the school improvement plan. Decisive management action has ensured that the one area for improvement from the last inspection, in ICT, has been developed very well.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

The Grove Primary School, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5ED

I am writing to thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed talking to you and found everything that you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about you and the school.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is good. We also think that there are some things that are outstanding. These are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school:

- You enjoy school, work hard in your lessons and make good progress.
- You behave excellently and are kind to each other.
- Your teachers work really hard to help you to learn and make your lessons interesting.
- All the staff work well together to keep you safe and healthy and you have a very good range of activities both in and out of school that you really enjoy.
- Your headteacher leads the school excellently and makes sure that you make the most of your time at school.
- The governors support the school very well.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that in lessons and when marking your work they make it clear to you what you need to do to improve. Then you can understand the learning steps you need to take to make even more progress.

As your headteacher, Ms Hanrott, leaves the school she will think about your hard work and the work of the staff and governors which has led to such a good inspection report. She should be very proud of her part in making The Grove such a special place to work and learn.

As to the future, you can help to improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and help each other. I am sure that you will.

Best wishes

Robert Pyner Her Majesty's Inspector