



# Grove Park Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118529  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291158  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Carole Skinner

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hilton Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Sittingbourne
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		ME10 1PT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 477417
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	475	<b>Fax number</b>	01795 436063
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ceranne Litton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21–22 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291158
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Grove Park is a large primary school on the outskirts of Sittingbourne. It draws its pupils from a large catchment area in which there are pockets of deprivation as well as relatively affluent parts. The majority of pupils are of White British origin whilst around 6% come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, especially in language and literacy skills.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which has improved significantly over the past three years. Good leadership and management have enabled the school to tackle a legacy of underachievement in Years 3 to 6 and to improve the quality of education for all pupils. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors have become increasingly effective in evaluating the school's performance and taking action to address identified weaknesses. This has led to a recent marked rise in standards in Years 1 and 2, where they are well above average. Standards are also improving in Years 3 to 6. They are above average in English but closer to national averages in mathematics and science because a few of the more able pupils do not achieve high enough standards.

Most pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Good teaching and an exciting range of activities get children off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage, enabling them to reach expected standards. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to rapid progress and well-above-average standards. Teaching is mostly good in Years 3 to 6, though not yet consistently so across all year groups. The more able pupils are not always given work that challenges and extends them sufficiently.

As well as raising academic standards, the school has done much to improve pupils' personal development and well-being, which are good. A zero-tolerance approach to bullying and unacceptable behaviour has had a significant impact. Behaviour is now good, and occasionally exemplary, and pupils say they really enjoy school. This is partly due to the school's efforts to make learning more interesting by creating a good, varied curriculum which includes more 'hands-on' learning and a greater variety of approaches. Pupils' well-being, including their health, safety and security, is at the heart of the good care, support and guidance that the school provides. Parents comment on the school's 'calm and friendly atmosphere' and its 'happy learning environment'. Close links with parents, most of whom express very positive views of the school, enable them to support their children's learning effectively at home.

A knowledgeable and committed leadership team with high aspirations for the pupils, and dedicated staff who are receptive to new ways of working ensure that the school is well equipped to sustain the momentum of improvement in the future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are always given suitably challenging work so that they reach higher standards in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good or better in order to sustain the brisk rate of progress established in the infant classes.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their often lower-than-average starting points. Progress is more reliably good in the infant classes than in Years 3 to 6 because there has been greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in the past few years. There is also a very smooth and effective transition from Reception into Year 1 which ensures that all pupils' needs are very well catered for. Standards in Year 2 rose to exceptionally high levels in reading and writing in 2005. They remain well above national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

In Year 6, standards in English have improved considerably because the school has successfully narrowed the gap between achievement in reading and writing. More and more pupils, especially boys, are reaching above-average levels (Level 5). Although standards are improving in mathematics and science and are broadly average, too few pupils are reaching Level 5 in these subjects. Having carefully analysed the reasons for this, the school is now focusing on developing pupils' problem-solving and investigative skills. Data analysis also identified past underachievement in Years 3, 4 and 5, which the school is working successfully to eliminate by setting challenging targets for all pupils.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Pupils are well motivated in lessons because of the lively and interesting teaching. They are courteous and friendly to visitors. Most pupils take responsibility for their own conduct, but a few require more frequent reminders of the school's expectations. Reception children settle in quickly and soon become confident members of the school community. Year 6 pupils help to look after them as well as taking on a range of other responsibilities. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. "Bullying? This school won't put up with it!" said one eight-year-old.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of community and, through the school council, have a say in improving the school. Pupils played an important role in the playground improvement project and in deciding how to spend the funds allotted to the scheme. Through projects of this kind, pupils develop good teamwork skills and awareness of financial planning. Pupils often choose healthy food options and drink water regularly. Although they make good use of the extensive grounds for vigorous exercise during the day, many would like more opportunity to develop their physical skills in sports activities after school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is good overall in Years 3 to 6 but there is more variation in the quality of teaching than in the infant classes. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of their attitudes to work and pupils respond well to these expectations, for example, in their ability to work sensibly together. Teaching assistants provide good additional support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers in each year group plan lessons together. This promotes consistency and the effective sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Increasingly imaginative planning and lively, enthusiastic teaching make learning interesting for pupils. This is evident both in daily lessons and in special projects such as the 'Away Day'. The quality of learning, particularly for boys, has improved through a greater emphasis on practical 'hands-on' activities. In a few lessons, more-able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work. This limits the progress they make. The needs of other groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are well met and this enables them to make good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is continually evolving as teachers respond to new ideas and initiatives. Variations between boys' and girls' achievement have prompted the introduction of initiatives to make learning more varied and interesting. These have been particularly successful in improving the quality of boys' writing. Initiatives are being implemented to improve problem-solving and investigative work in mathematics and science, but these are not yet fully effective in raising standards for the more able pupils. Topics have been made more relevant and enjoyable for both boys and girls as teachers have become more creative in their planning. The curriculum is enriched by a broad range of extra-curricular activities, although there are fewer sporting activities than is usual for a large primary school. The school is currently exploring ways to remedy this situation in response to pupils' requests. Further enrichment comes through special projects, as when pupils composed and produced their own opera, 'The Unexpected Visitor', in conjunction with the Royal Opera House.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Consistently good care, guidance and support lie at the heart of pupils' good achievement and personal development. Parents describe the school as 'caring' and 'nurturing' and find the staff 'approachable, friendly and open'. There are thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils and promoting healthy lifestyles. The annual 'anti-bullying week' has a significant impact on reducing instances of aggressive

behaviour. The school has taken effective steps to improve aspects of health and safety which were of concern to parents. There are good systems for tracking pupils' personal and academic progress, but these have yet to have their full impact on raising achievement in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are well aware of their targets and are keen to achieve them. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils make good progress, especially those with learning difficulties.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school. She is supported very well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic management team who play a key role in determining the school's strategic direction and share her vision for its future development. Very good leadership of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 has had a significant impact on the quality of education and the standards achieved by pupils. Significant improvements in English, especially writing, have resulted from rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses, the introduction of well-planned initiatives, and thorough monitoring of pupils' progress. These processes are now being applied to mathematics and science as the focus shifts to raising standards in those subjects.

Senior managers provide strong support for colleagues, some of whom are at an earlier stage of developing their roles as subject leaders. They have a very clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning and are effective in bringing about improvement through training and support, both for teachers and support staff. Governors are actively involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness and offer both challenge and support to the headteacher and staff. They are currently seeking ways to extend their role in monitoring the quality of provision.

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## 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	2
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	3
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

### 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed the time we spent with you and would like to thank you for being so helpful. It's plain to see that you enjoy being there and we can see why.

Grove Park is a good school where all the adults take good care of you and help you to make good progress. The teachers make lessons interesting and this helps you to have fun while you learn. We were impressed by your good behaviour and your enthusiasm in lessons. It was good to see you all taking the 'Anti-bullying Week' so seriously, as this is obviously helping to make your school a safer place.

You obviously enjoy the exciting things teachers plan for you to do in addition to normal lessons, such as the 'Away Day'. What an achievement to produce and perform your own opera! You told us you would like more sports clubs and your teachers are already working on that. The adults who run the school are doing a good job because they are always looking for ways to make the school even better.

At the moment, children are making faster progress in the infant classes than in the juniors. We have asked the teachers to make sure that you all make good progress in every class. Also, a few of the older children could do better in mathematics and science. We have asked the teachers to give these children more challenges to make them think hard and help them achieve even higher standards. You can help to make your school even better by continuing to work hard – and keep up the good behaviour!

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Grove Park.